The adult illustrated fantasy magazine

October 1978
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CHAIN MAIL

Deear Edidorz,

Wejoyda komigstrep "Nindeen Nindee Six" ba Canareedi sumtimz. Wurjur wur natha ownlee wonz. Wurmizing toomuj sopleez ride a terpretajon ontha bodomov or endov da komigstrep. Weej preejeeadi.

Responz reguezded.

Zinzarlee,
Debradee Balondine an
Jonee Benajon
Zanhoza, Kalavornia

Dear Dee 'n' Jay:

Bud thadud tayg aluh fun owduv id!—Edz.

Dear *HM*,

"Urm" was incredible! Druillet is, in my opinion, the most talented artwise, even though his colors could take a longer time. All of your strips are terrific and imaginative, especially "1996," which takes me about an hour to read each time!

Sam Powell
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Sam,

Taygz abowd unower tu ride id, too.—Edz.

Dear Editors,

Super cover on the June issue—it's nice to see a woman who isn't lying on her back with a) fear, b) anticipation, or c) both in her eyes. However, I'm not writing to argue with you about sexist content. I'm more interested in the artwork, anyway. (But here's a cheer for Bob Aull's rape scene—a Bronx one.)

Please give us more Moebius, more Barbarella, and more Kofoed.

Finally, your June issue was *made* when I saw page 24. "Technician Visions" and I have something in common—although it isn't our measurements.

If you could get *HM* past the censors, you could clean up here in Japan. Some of my Japanese coworkers go crazy when I leave the latest issue in the break-room.

Misty I. Bastian
Kadena AFB, Okinawa

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HEAVY METAL

Vol. II, No. 6 October 1978

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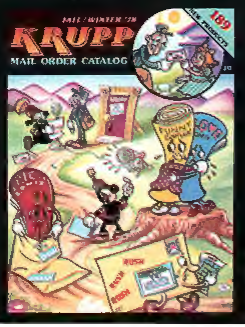

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...PERHAPS...

In this month when the dead arise & walk around in their bones, & religious services are conducted backward with black turnips for munchies, & toads see eye to eye with punkins, we being you a suitably macabre edition of *Heavy Metal.*

A zombie jamboree from *Dawn of the Dead*, the flick that should do for shopping malls what Great White Bruce did for beach parties; illuminated fiction by Mark Wheatley (new to our pages) that tells you perhaps more than you wished to know about dragons' libidos; and an illustrated version of Harlan Ellison's classic nail-biter, *Shattered Like a Glass Goblin.* (Advice to those of you who subscribe to the Braille version of *HM*— do not read this issue in the dark.)

We are pleased to introduce the amazing Angus McKie, whose story, "So Beautiful and So Dangerous," begins within. A. Mc K. lives, it seems, in England, and no one there has told him that comics don't have to be written and drawn as well as this. So we can count on seven more stunning chapters, if he doesn't find out.

We also bring you the first of 8 episodes of "Exterminator 17," a collaboration between *Metal Hurlant* editor J.P. Dionnet & artist Enki Bilal. It concerns, among other things, undead androids, & stands out as Real-Thing Science Fiction among these pages full of off-the-wall variations.

Next month, we will present you with a deck of Tarot cards with which to play and always, always lose.

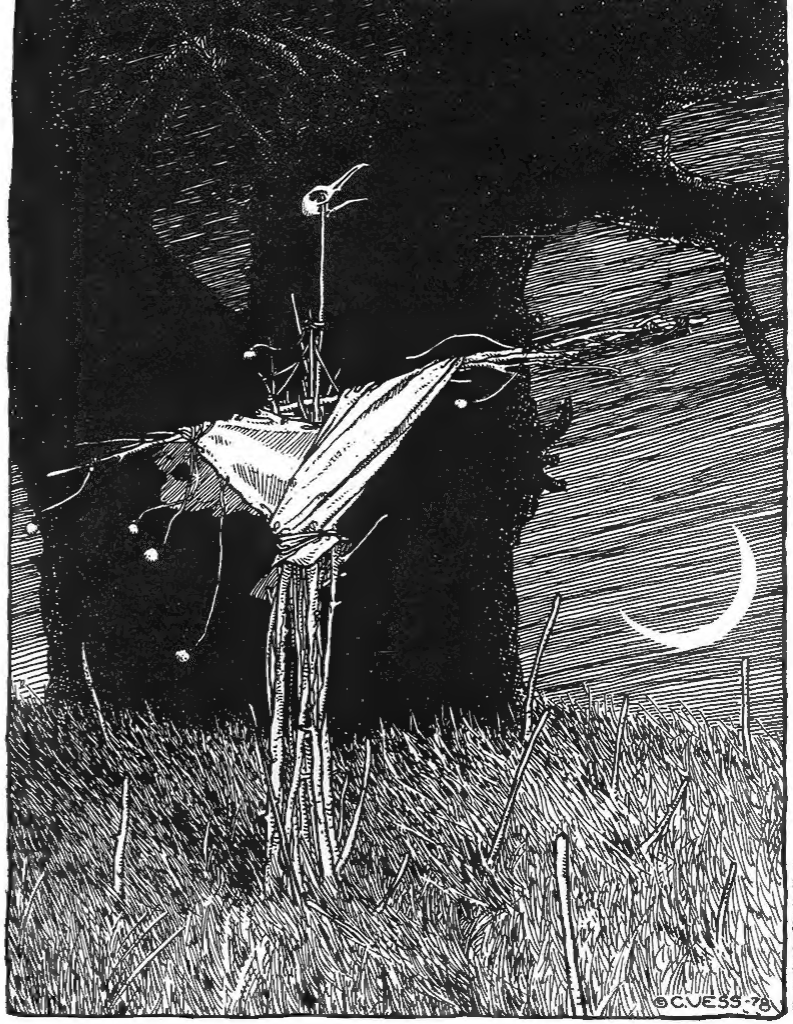

Illustration by Charles Vess

Heavy apology to Harlan Ellison, Byron Preiss Visual Publications, and Baronet Publishing for the indignities heaped upon their version of Ellison's classic *Croatoan* in our last issue. Seems someone saw fit to run the *last* page *first, white* type in *black, black* type in *white*, and so forth. For the correct pagination, plus a host of other illustrated Ellison stories by Steranko, Reese, and *Shattered*'s own Bill Stout, there's a coupon ad for The Illustrated Harlan Ellison in this issue.

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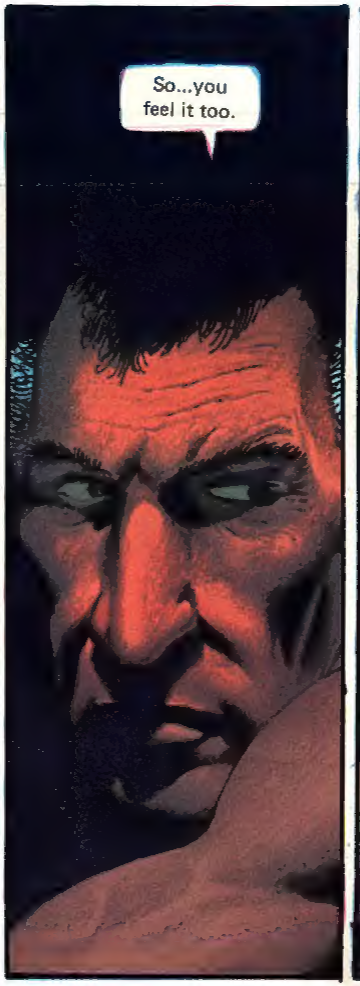
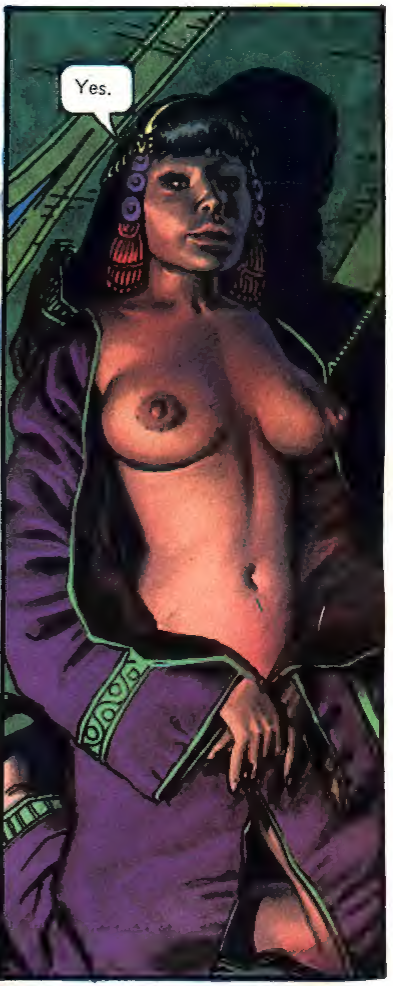
Sindbad in the Land of the Jinn
"...annoyances proliferated..."
"... and finally— our first death."
Zeyd!
We'll all die if we don't find water, Akissa.
That means a detour through Ketra...a delay.
Make camp. We'll head for Ketra in the morning.
New Tales of the Arabian Nights

"A strange energy pervaded this land. That night, though physically exhausted, my body throbbed with a desire that wouldn't be repressed."


So...you feel it too.


Yes.

AIII!
SCHSCHSCHSCHSCH

Sindbad!
SCH-K-K-K-SCH
Allah save us!
to be continued

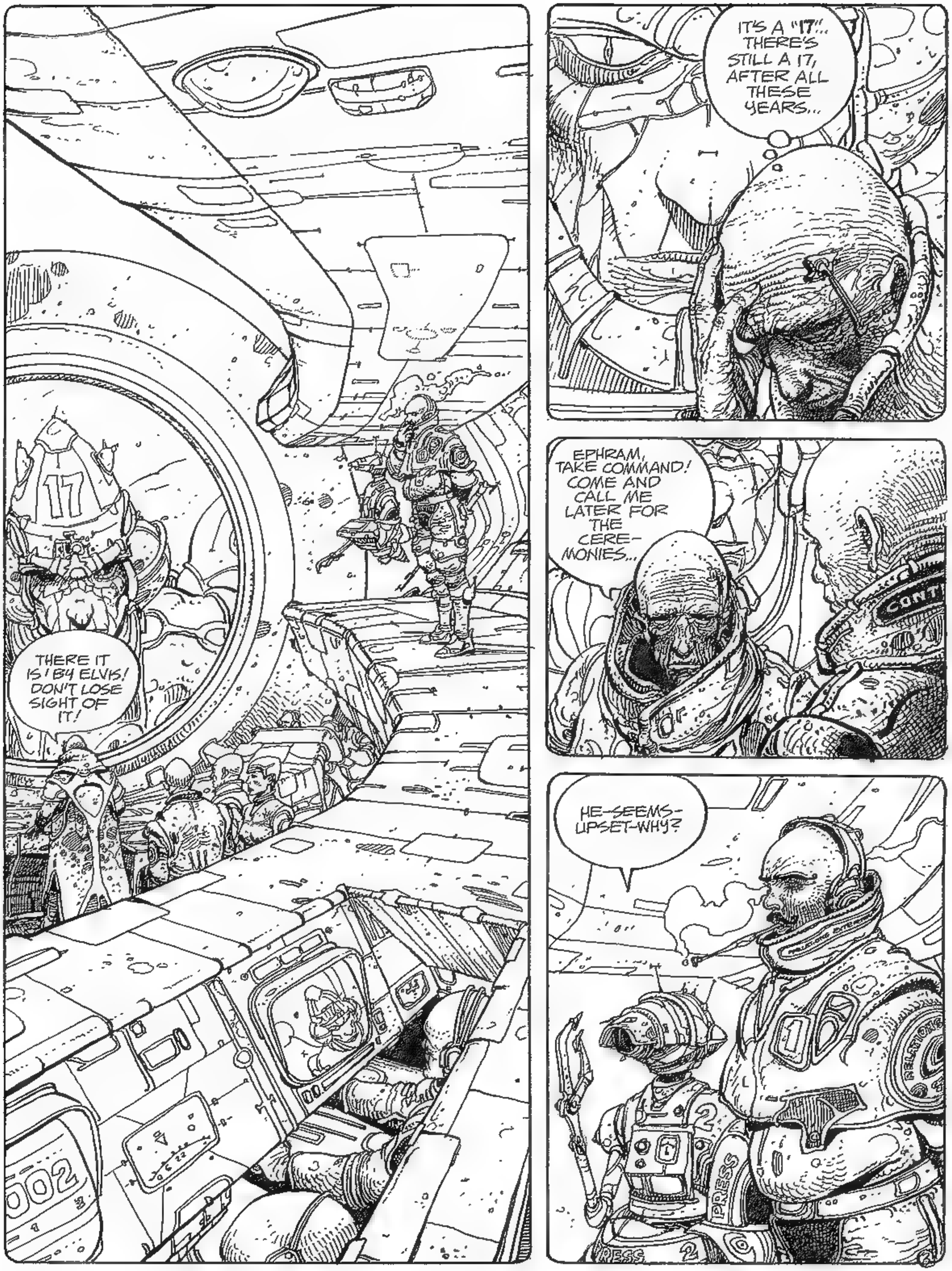
EXTERMINATOR 17

...SURPRISE ATTACK AGAINST PLANETOID NOVACK-CONSORTIUM REPRISAL-MOTIVE: RUPTURED ALLEGIANCE-FORCES ENGAGED:

A Y-TYPE BARGE-EXTERMINATING CAPACITY MOEBIUS 7-THE LOB STRATEGY-FORECAST(MARGIN FOR ERROR 5F)-GLOBAL VICTORY IN 12'45"

STOP!

ENLARGE THAT IMAGE!


17
THERE IT IS! BY ELVIS! DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF IT!
002
IT'S A "17"... THERE'S STILL A 17, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
EPHRAM, TAKE COMMAND! COME AND CALL ME LATER FOR THE CERE-MONIES...
HE-SEEMS-UPSET-WHY?
PRESS
2

FOLLOW ME! I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT...

WHERE-ARE-WE?

IN THE ANDROIDS' GALLERY...

CONTROL 3X61

HERE'S THE LATEST MODEL...

ALL THE DATA ON THE ARTIFICIAL MEN CREATED BY THE MASTER IS STORED HERE...

THIS ONE IS THE MOST COMMON...IT STILL ACCOUNTS FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE ARMY TODAY...

AND HERE IS THE ANCESTOR OF THEM ALL...THE 17!

BUT-WERE-THERE-16-BEFORE?

16 TRIES, 16 ASSORTED ATTEMPTS ...THE IT WAS THE FIRST OPERATIONAL SPECIMEN...

ORIGINA

SCALE -

TYPE 5

17

NO

IT WAS ALSO THE LAST EXPERIMENT IN WHICH HE USED HIS OWN CELLS ..THIS ANDROID IS MORE THAN A DOUBLE...IT IS **HIMSELF**, YOUNG, JUST 30 YEARS OLD...SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND NOW HIS FEELINGS ON SEEING ONE AGAIN TODAY, EXACTLY...

HEARD-AND-RECORDED. THEY-SAY-NEITHER-THE-MASTER-NOR-ANYONE-ELSE-HAS-EVER-MANAGED-TO-REPRODUCE-THE-HUMAN-EYE.

THAT'S TRUE... BUT THE ANDROIDS' EYES ARE ACTUALLY MUCH MORE PERFECT AND MUCH LESS FRAGILE... LOOK AT THIS ONE..

CLICK

BUZZZ

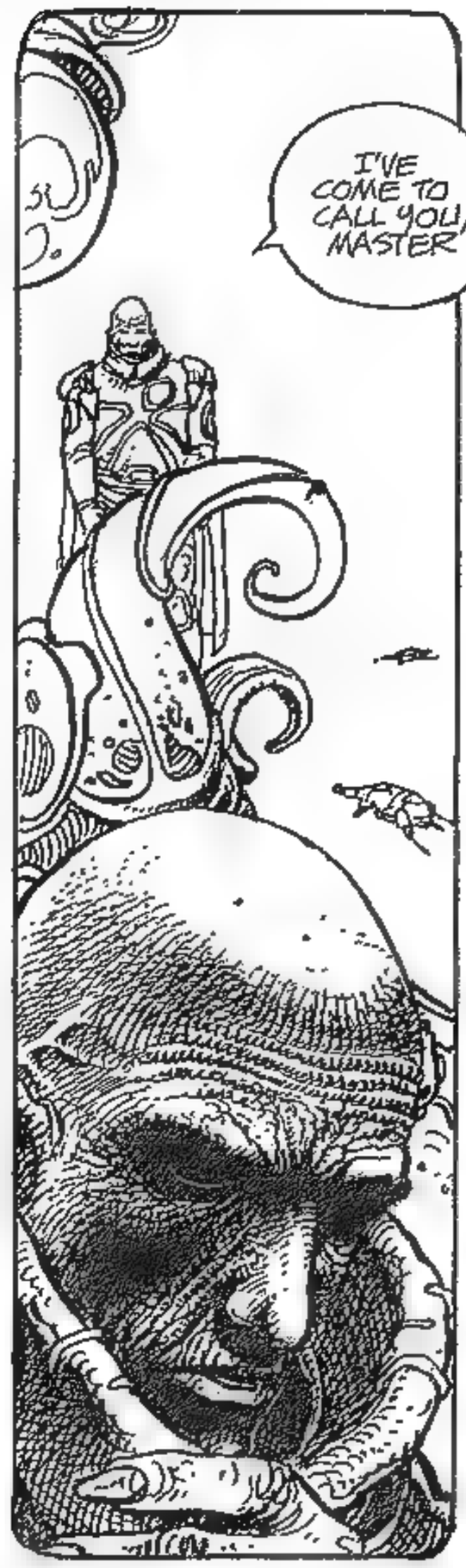
PHASE SANCTIONED BY SIGMA
PHASE SANCTIONED BY SIGMA
IMMEDIATE INTERRUPTION OF
OPERATION IN PROGRESS

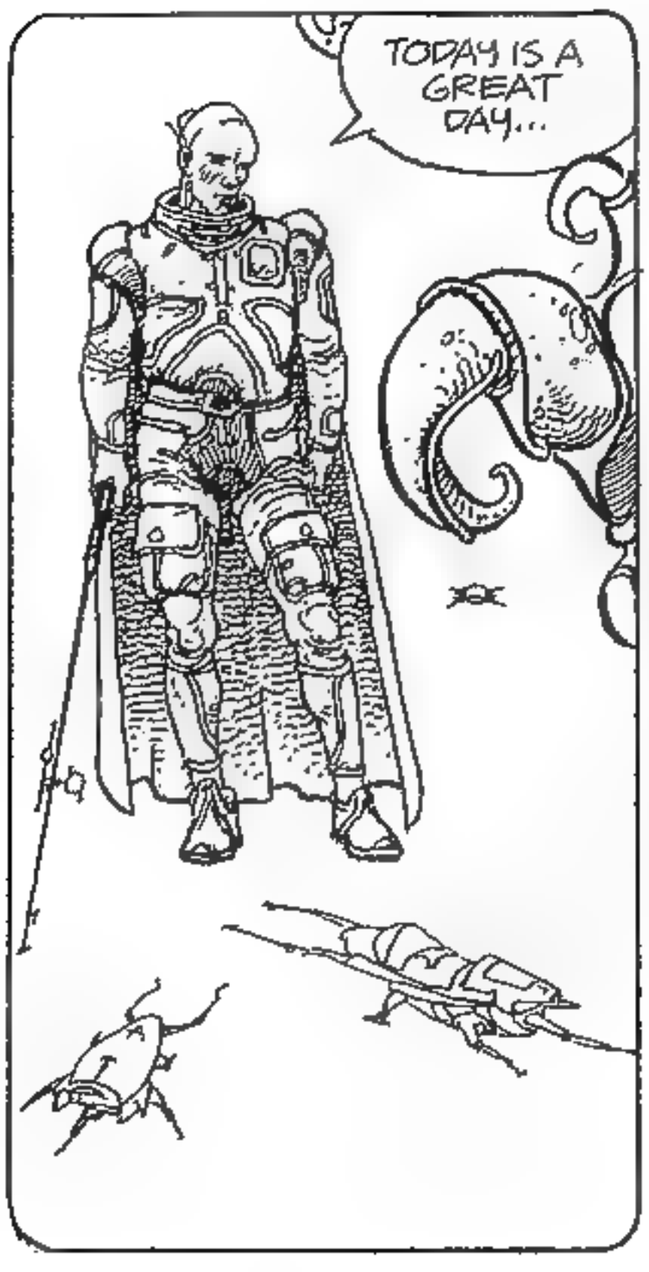
A TREATY HAS COME IMMEDIATELY INTO EFFECT. WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO WITHDRAW THE WEAPONRY TO EARTH, YOU DESTROY IT ON THE SPOT TO AVOID ALL THE LEGAL COMPLICATIONS...

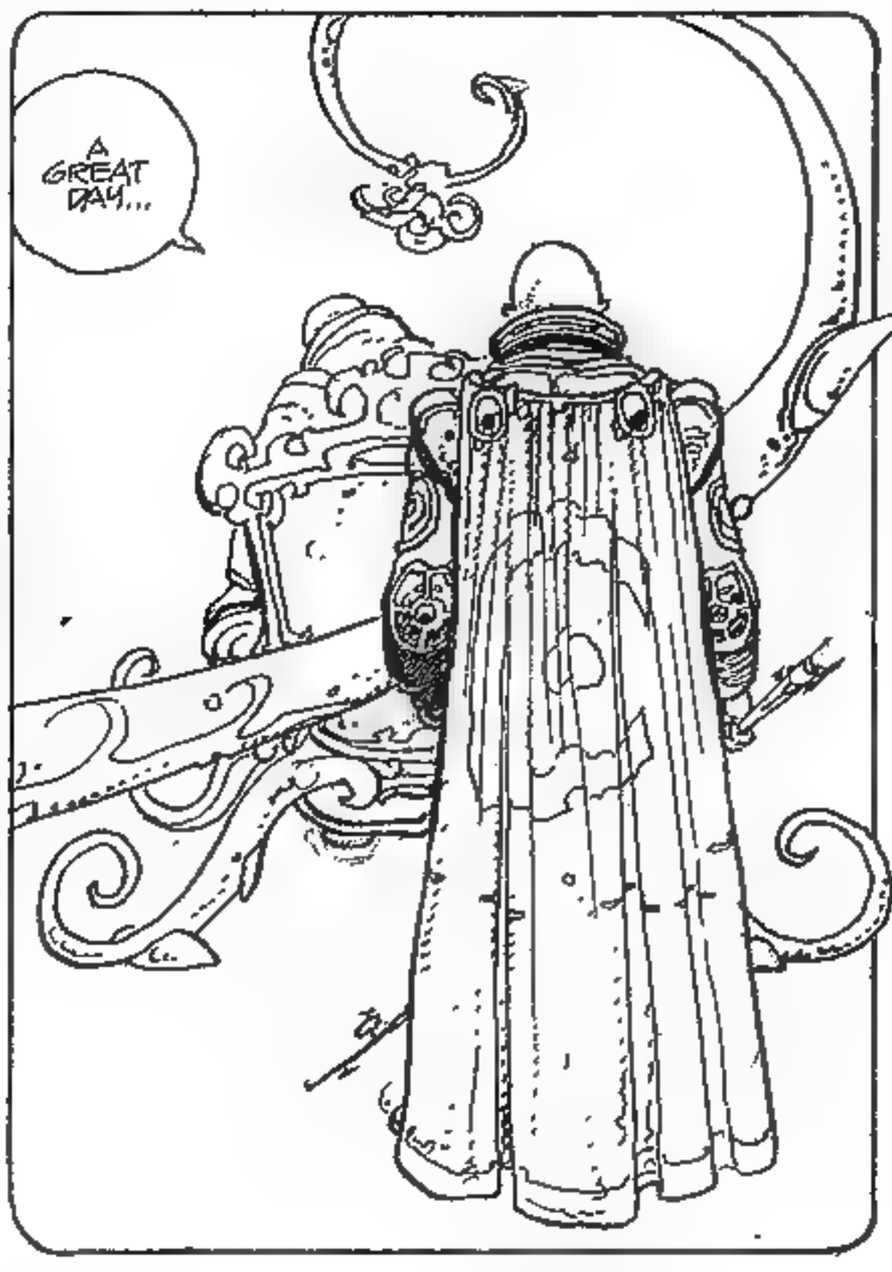
WHAT-IS-GOING-ON?

ARE-DE-ACTIVATED-ANDROIDS-REPAIR-ABLE?

NO, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THEM WORKING AGAIN... ALL THE CIRCUITS AUTO-DESTRUCT!


I'VE COME TO CALL YOU, MASTER


TODAY IS A GREAT DAY...


A GREAT DAY...

I AM OLD AND THEY'RE RETIRING ME! A GREAT DAY TO BE SURE!

BUT TODAY ALL HUMANITY SALUTES YOU... IT THANKS YOU FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE...

IT THANKS ME FOR CREATING THE ANDROIDS AND FOR GIVING THEM MY DISCOVERY, LIKE IT OR NOT... IT THANKS ME FOR CREATING THE EXTERMINATORS!

YOU'VE NEVER TALKED LIKE THIS BEFORE, MASTER. WAS IT THE "17" YOU SAW JUST NOW WHICH HAS UPSET YOU?...

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I MUST TELL YOU THAT PEACE HAS BEEN SIGNED AND THE 17 WAS DE-ACTIVATED WITH THE OTHERS...

CLANG

MASTER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

ARE YOU...

HELP ME!

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

SILENCE!
THE MASTER IS ABOUT TO SPEAK!

I WOULD JUST...LIKE TO SAY...
AAAHHHH ...I....

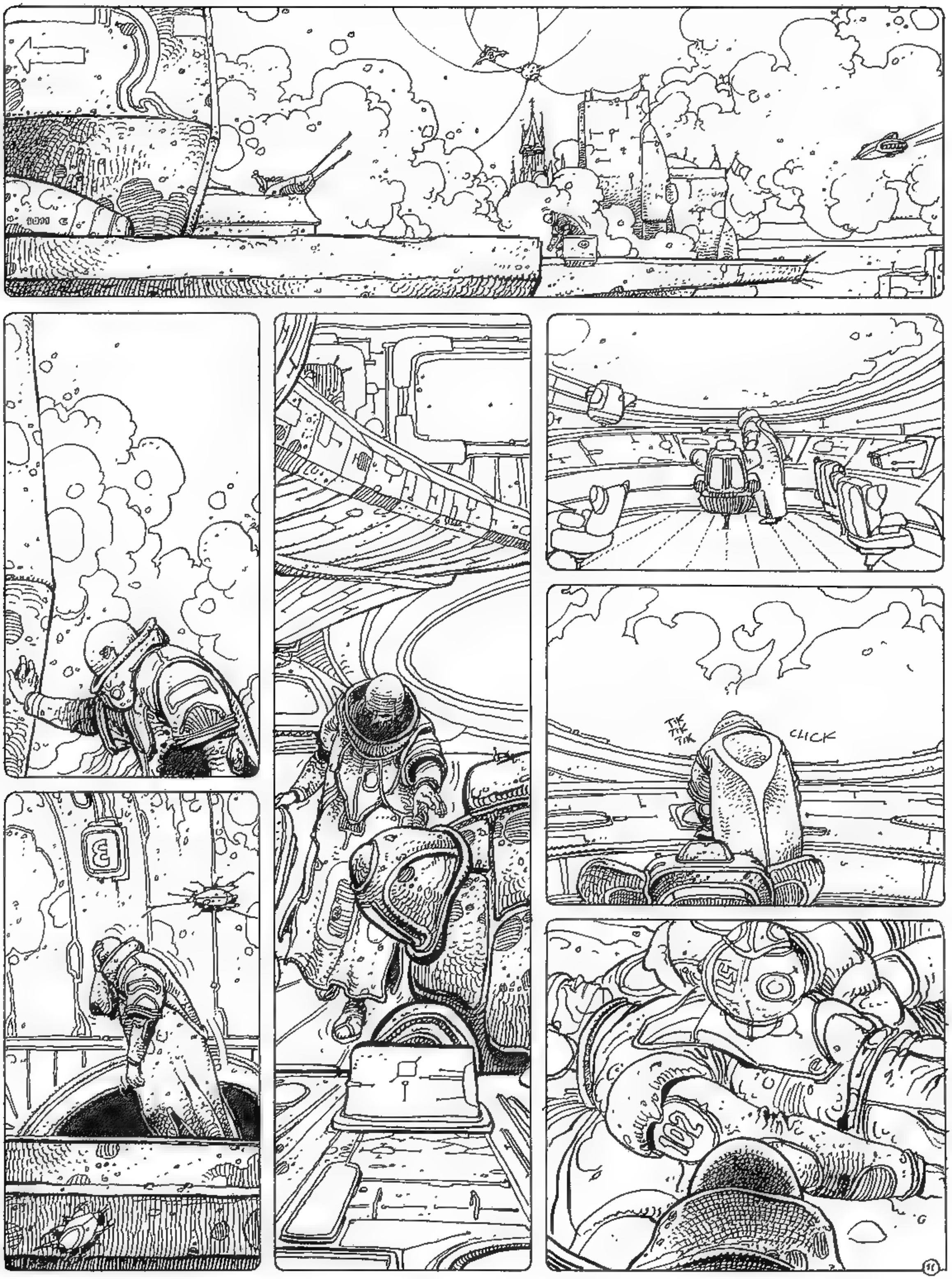
DON'T WORRY! THE MASTER IS USED TO THIS SORT OF ILLNESS!

LEAVE US... I WILL STAY WITH HIM UNTIL THE GLIDER ARRIVES...

MASTER!

IT'LL BE ALL... COULD YOU GET ME A GLASS OF WATER, EPHRAM!...

WC


TIK
TIK
TIK
CLICK

HE'S DEAD!

HURRY! HE'S HERE!!!

CLICK

STORY: DIONNET ART: BILAL
(TO BE CONTINUED)

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"WHILE ORION DEFENDS HIS LIFE AGAINST CHANDRA'S ZOMBIES, MAMBA IS SLOWLY BEING PULVERIZED BY THE POWERFUL ARMS OF THE MUTE TROGLODYTE, URZA, UNTIL ...

HOLD! NO NEED TO KILL HIM!

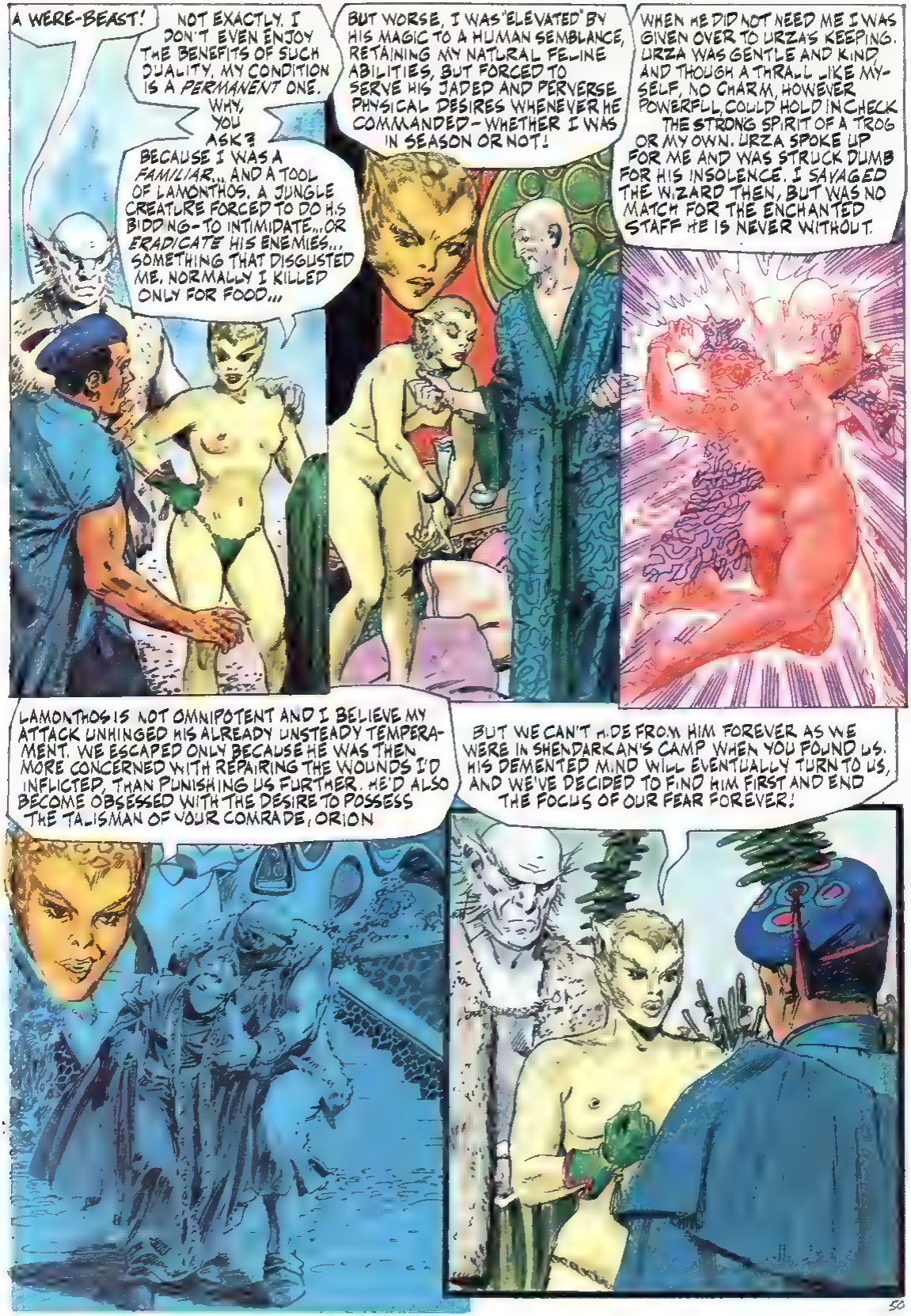
I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY! EVEN IF MY ADVANCES WERE UNWELCOME, A POLITE NO WOULD HAVE SUFFICED!

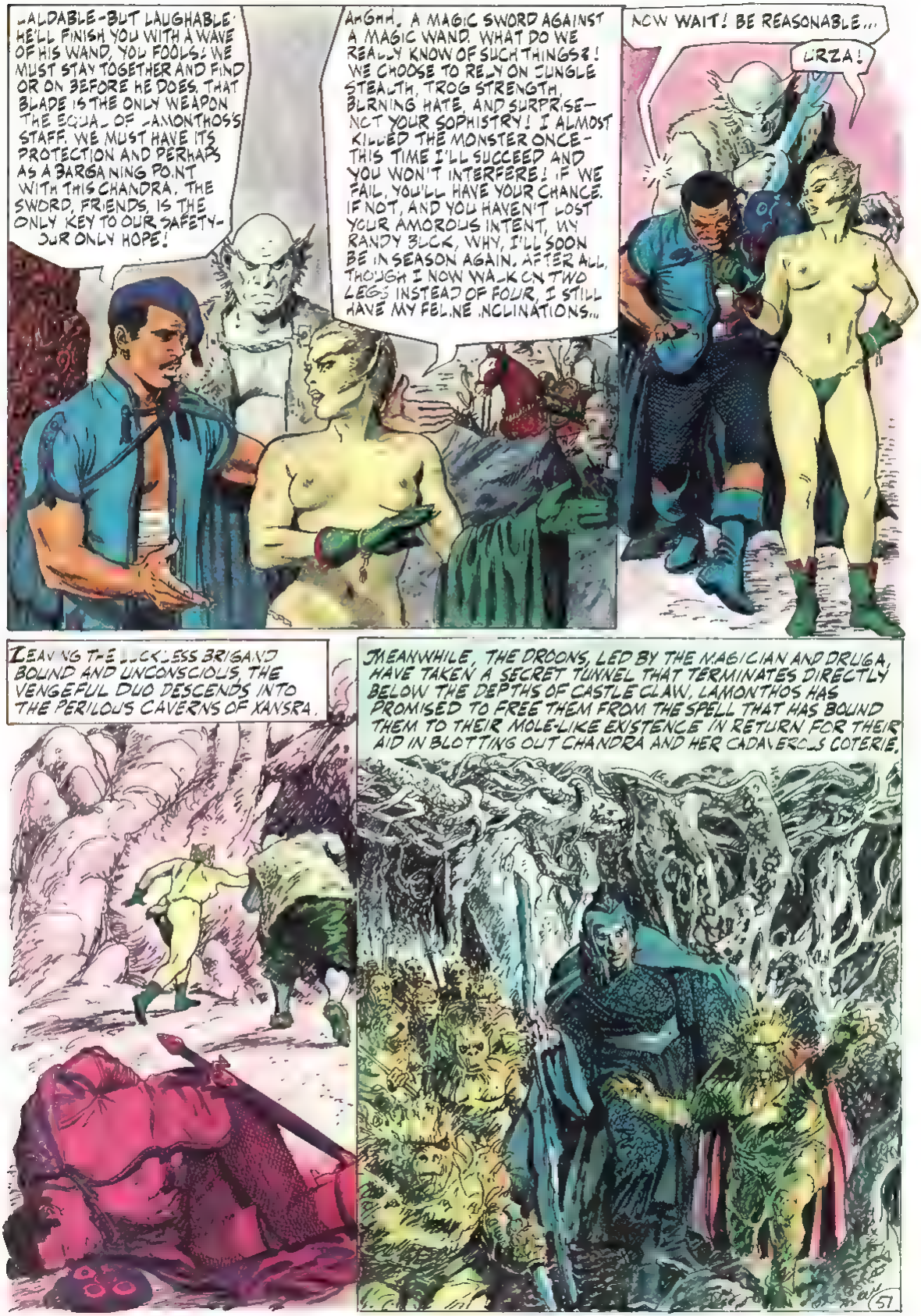
AT A BETTER TIME, PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE WELCOME, FRIEND MAMBA —BUT OTHER MATTERS PREVENT A DALLIANCE NOW. FIRSTLY, I DO NOT INTEND FOR YOU TO CHEAT ME OF MY REVENGE. YOU WILL REMAIN BEHIND WHILE URZA AND I CLAIM THE FINAL PRICE OF THE LOATHSOME LAMONTHOS—OR PAY IT OURSELVES FOR THE ATTEMPT.

AHHH, YOU'RE A HARD WOMAN TO DEPRIVE ME OF THE SAME CLAIM AND YOUR FAVORS.

ALWAYS THE GALLANT, EH RAKE? WELL, LET ME REVEAL TO YOU THE REASON FOR MY NEED OF VENGEANCE— AND SEE IF THE HEAT OF YOUR ARDOR REMAINS CONSTANT.

YOU MAY HAVE YOUR REASONS FOR DESP.S.NG THE WIZARD BUT MINE TAKE PRECEDENCE, I TH.NK YOU WILL AGREE. LOOK! LOOK UPON MY DEGRADATION AND DESPAIR!


A WERE-BEAST!
NOT EXACTLY. I DON'T EVEN ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF SUCH DUALITY. MY CONDITION IS A *PERMANENT* ONE.
WHY, YOU ASK?
BECAUSE I WAS A *FAMILIAR*... AND A TOOL OF LAMONTHOS, A JUNGLE CREATURE FORCED TO DO HIS BIDDING - TO INTIMIDATE...OR *ERADICATE* HIS ENEMIES... SOMETHING THAT DISGUSTED ME. NORMALLY I KILLED ONLY FOR FOOD...
BUT WORSE, I WAS "ELEVATED" BY HIS MAGIC TO A HUMAN SEMBLANCE, RETAINING MY NATURAL FELINE ABILITIES, BUT FORCED TO SERVE HIS JADED AND PERVERSE PHYSICAL DESIRES WHENEVER HE COMMANDED - WHETHER I WAS IN SEASON OR NOT!
WHEN HE DID NOT NEED ME I WAS GIVEN OVER TO URZA'S KEEPING. URZA WAS GENTLE AND KIND, AND THOUGH A THRALL LIKE MYSELF, NO CHARM, HOWEVER POWERFUL, COULD HOLD IN CHECK THE STRONG SPIRIT OF A TROG OR MY OWN. URZA SPOKE UP FOR ME AND WAS STRUCK DUMB FOR HIS INSOLENCE. I SAVAGED THE WIZARD THEN, BUT WAS NO MATCH FOR THE ENCHANTED STAFF HE IS NEVER WITHOUT.
LAMONTHOS IS NOT OMNIPOTENT AND I BELIEVE MY ATTACK UNHINGED HIS ALREADY UNSTEADY TEMPERAMENT. WE ESCAPED ONLY BECAUSE HE WAS THEN MORE CONCERNED WITH REPAIRING THE WOUNDS I'D INFLICTED, THAN PUNISHING US FURTHER. HE'D ALSO BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE DESIRE TO POSSESS THE TALISMAN OF YOUR COMRADE, ORION
BUT WE CAN'T HIDE FROM HIM FOREVER AS WE WERE IN SHENDARKAN'S CAMP WHEN YOU FOUND US. HIS DEMENTED MIND WILL EVENTUALLY TURN TO US, AND WE'VE DECIDED TO FIND HIM FIRST AND END THE FOCUS OF OUR FEAR FOREVER!


-ALDABLE-BUT LAUGHABLE. HE'LL FINISH YOU WITH A WAVE OF HIS WAND, YOU FOOLS! WE MUST STAY TOGETHER AND FIND OR ON BEFORE HE DOES. THAT BLADE IS THE ONLY WEAPON THE EQUA_ OF -AMONTHOS'S STAFF. WE MUST HAVE ITS PROTECTION AND PERHAPS AS A BARGAINING POINT WITH THIS CHANDRA. THE SWORD, FRIENDS, IS THE ONLY KEY TO OUR SAFETY- OUR ONLY HOPE!
AHGHH. A MAGIC SWORD AGAINST A MAGIC WAND. WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW OF SUCH THINGS?! WE CHOOSE TO RELY ON JUNGLE STEALTH, TROG STRENGTH, BURNING HATE, AND SURPRISE— NOT YOUR SOPHISTRY! I ALMOST KILLED THE MONSTER ONCE— THIS TIME I'LL SUCCEED AND YOU WON'T INTERFERE! IF WE FAIL, YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE. IF NOT, AND YOU HAVEN'T LOST YOUR AMOROUS INTENT, MY RANDY BUCK, WHY, I'LL SOON BE IN SEASON AGAIN. AFTER ALL, THOUGH I NOW WALK ON TWO LEGS INSTEAD OF FOUR, I STILL HAVE MY FELINE INCLINATIONS...
NOW WAIT! BE REASONABLE...
URZA!
LEAVING THE LUCKLESS BRIGAND BOUND AND UNCONSCIOUS, THE VENGEFUL DUO DESCENDS INTO THE PERILOUS CAVERNS OF XANSRA.
MEANWHILE, THE DROONS, LED BY THE MAGICIAN AND DRUGA, HAVE TAKEN A SECRET TUNNEL THAT TERMINATES DIRECTLY BELOW THE DEPTHS OF CASTLE CLAW. LAMONTHOS HAS PROMISED TO FREE THEM FROM THE SPELL THAT HAS BOUND THEM TO THEIR MOLE-LIKE EXISTENCE IN RETURN FOR THEIR AID IN BLOTTING OUT CHANDRA AND HER CADAVEROUS COTERIE.
51

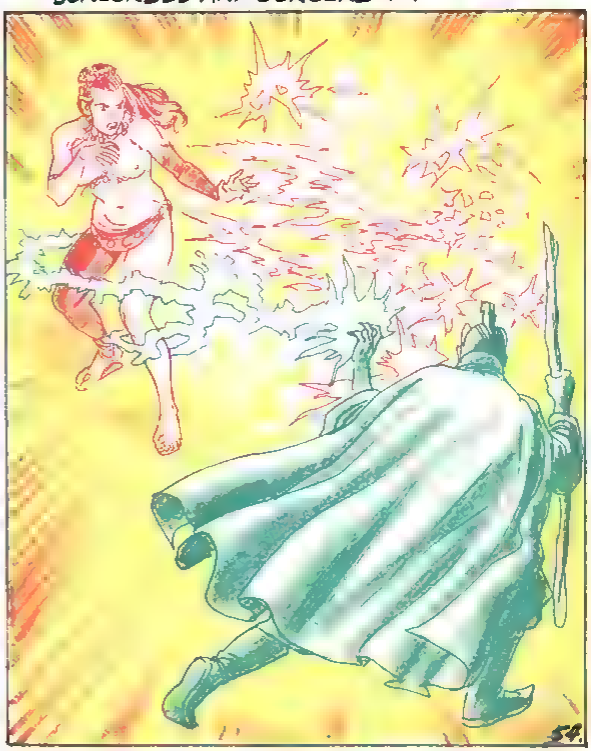
THE AROUSED DROONS POUR OUT OF THE BOWELS OF CASTLE CLAW AND CLOSE WITH THE LIVING DEAD IN FURIOUS COMBAT, AN ENCOUNTER THAT CAN ONLY BE A HOLDING ACTION, AS NEITHER CAN SERIOUSLY HARM THE OTHER. THEY ARE ONLY MINOR PLAYERS IN THE DEADLY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TWO MIGHTY MAGICIANS!
AN UNEXPECTED, BUT NONETHELESS WELCOME, INTRUSION. LET'S NOT BOTHER TO SAY OUR FAREWELLS TO THE CHARMING HOSTESS!
CHANDRA EXPERIENCES MOMENTARY PANIC AND INSTINCTIVELY DARTS BEHIND A CURTAIN.
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND! THEY NO LONGER FEAR ME!
THE OTHER PRINCIPALS IN THE BATTLE PREPARE TO DISTURB THE BALANCE IN THE CATACLYSMIC CLASH TO COME.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THOSE MANDRAKE PEOPLE CAME FROM- BUT THEY ARRIVED JUST IN TIME GET THOSE GHOULS' ATTENTION AWAY FROM ME. HURRY, LET'S FIND THON'S MACHINES!
THEY ARE DROONS. THEY NEVER HAD NERVE ENOUGH TO ATTACK CHANDRA BEFORE. SOMETHING MUST HAVE INFLAMED THEM.
NOT SOMETHING- SOMEONE! IT MUST BE LAMONTHOS! NOW WE REALLY HAVE TO HURRY! LEAD THE WAY!
THE SHEER IMPACT OF THE DROON'S OVERWHELMING ATTACK, RADIATING WHITE-HOT WAVES OF PURE HATE, MOMENTARILY UNNERVES CHANDRA. THEN ANOTHER DANGER MANIFESTS ITSELF TO HER MAGICALLY ATTUNED SENSES, INCREASING HER ALARM.
THE VAPOR DEVICES! SOMETHING THREATENS THEM!
AH-HA-HA! EXCELLENT! AS I'D HOPED, MY ROWDY VASSALS SO DISTURBED DAME CHANDRA'S COMPOSURE, SHE DIDN'T SENSE MY ENTRANCE INTO HER RETREAT. I MUST KEEP HER OFF GUARD.
52

ORION, CHANDRA WILL BE UPON US ANY MOMENT! DO WHAT YOU'VE COME TO DO QUICKLY! I SHOULD'VE GUESSED SHE'D NOT LEAVE THIS PLACE UNGUARDED!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT'S WRONG?
SHE'S GIRDED THIS CHAMBER WITH A POWERFUL SPELL. IT WARNS HER OF OUR PRESENCE. DO YOU FEEL IT? ...LIKE WAVES OF ENERGY BEATING US DOWN ... I-I'M ...DIZZY...GETTING WEAK...
SPRITE! JUST HOLD ON! I...
T'S ...TOO LATE!
SO, ORION, YOU WOULD DARE OPPUGN ME!

AT THAT MOMENT...
AHAH! JUST HOLD HER ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT LONGER, MY DEAR ORION...

WHO...?! LAMONTHOS! NO! DON'T....

TOO LATE, MY PET. THE VERY SUBSTANCE THAT SUSTAINED YOU ALL THESE AGES IS EVAPORATING, DISSIPATING LIKE SMOKE IN THE WIND. YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MATCH FOR ME A SECOND AGO, BUT NOW YOU MUST ALREADY FEEL THE WEIGHT OF ALL YOUR YEARS OVERTAKING YOU, WEAKENING YOU, CRUSHING YOU!!


BLINDING FLASHES OF LIVID, RAW POWER RIP ACROSS THE INTERVENING DISTANCE BETWEEN SORCERESS AND SORCERER...

...AND THEN, WITH AN ANGUISHED CRY, CHANDRA, KNOWING SHE IS BEATEN, SCORCHES THE VERY ETHER BETWEEN THEM WITH A WAVE OF SHEET LIGHTNING — AND DISAPPEARS THROUGH A SECRET PORTAL!

HA-HA-HAAA! RUN, LITTLE WITCH! **RUN!** YOU WON'T GO FAR, AND I'LL FIND YOU AND *FINISH* YOU — IF THE DROONS DON'T DO IT FIRST!

... AND NOW, ORION, WE MEET AGAIN... FOR THE LAST TIME! I'D HOPED TO AVOID SUCH DIRECT METHODS OF PRYING THORBOLT FREE FROM YOU. TO THAT END I EMPLOYED INVEIGLEMENT AND DECEPTION, WHICH IS SUCH **FUN**! BUT YOU, ALAS, WERE SINGULARLY *UNCOOPERATIVE*... SO, GIVE OVER THORBOLT TO MY KEEPING, OR...

...I'LL TAKE IT!!

TAKE IT THEN, IF YOU CAN, WIZARD... **IF YOU CAN!**

ORION, I...

GET CLEAR, SPRITE. THIS WON'T TAKE LONG — ONE WAY OR THE OTHER!

A DEEP, OMINOUS RUMBLING SEEMS TO EMANATE FROM EVERYWHERE, AND THORBOLT SHIMMERS AND FLASHES AS IF IN ANTICIPATION OF LAMONTHOS'S CHALLENGE!

ORION AND LAMONTHOS CLASH IN MORTAL COMBAT, ENCHANTED BLADE AGAINST ENSORCELLED STAFF, AND THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF TIME AND SPACE SEEM TO STRAIN AND SHUDDER AT THE TERRIBLE FORCES UNLEASHED....

TO BE CONTINUED-

OFF SEASON

I'M AFRAID! IT ALL FILLS ME WITH DREAD!

LET'S HAVE A GAME TOGETHER!

I KNOW WHAT IT IS!

A GAME? NO, I'D PREFER TO TAKE A WALK...

I'LL ORGANIZE MY NOTES LATER I WON'T LOSE SIGHT OF HIM...

YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT...

YES! RELAX! JUST TO REASSURE HIM!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M GETTING MYSELF TOGETHER AGAIN I USED TO SELL HOTDOGS AT A RARELY VISITED ARTIFICIAL LAKE. I WAS TOLD THAT COMMERCE FLOURISHES NEAR WATER...

NOTHING! NOTHING CAME OF IT!... IT'S NOT IMPORTANT, REALLY... I'M WAITING FOR HIM.

SO?

WHO?

I THINK I'LL GET SOME SLEEP..

YOU SHOULD SLEEP ON THE SAND. IT'S REALLY VERY NICE THERE

NO! WHERE'S MY ROOM?

ON THE GROUND FLOOR, FIRST DOOR ON THE LEFT

SHE CAN'T TAKE IT... FORTUNATELY, I CAN COUNT ON THE OTHER ONE

I'LL CLIMB THE CLIFF. A STORM'S BREWING

IT IS 5.00. IF NO ONE COMES TO TELL ME I HAVE TO CLEAR OUT, I PLAN TO SLEEP A LITTLE, HERE, IN PEACE.

WAIT! THE SUN BEING A LITTLE TRICKY, I MUST GET OUT, THE AIR WILL DO ME GOOD.

I FEEL THE ABSURD NEED TO JOIN THE OTHER RESIDENTS ON THE BEACH

IT WAS COLD BUT IT DID ME GOOD!

IT'S GOING TO RAIN! AREN'T YOU GOING BACK?

ASSISTANT!!

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN MY ASSISTANT, HAVE YOU?

THE ONE WHO ALWAYS SEEMS ASLEEP STANDING UP? NO, SHE NEVER LEFT THE HOTEL

WAKE UP!

THEY CAN'T BE LEFT ALONE COME ON!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND? I WAS FINE.. I WAS DREAMING THAT I WAS A PRIVATE DETECTIVE...

WILL YOU NEVER CHANGE?! THEY NEED US. WE'VE GOT TO BE THERE!

NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE! IT'S JUST ANOTHER BLUFF

WE CAN EACH GO OFF TO THE OPPOSITE END OF THE BEACH TO GET AN OVERALL VIEW..

THIS IS A CASE FOR THE SLEEPING WATCHMAN...

YOU'RE ALWAYS WORKING, AREN'T YOU! WHAT COURAGE!

ALL RIGHT SO THE BEACH BELONGS TO EVERYONE STILL AND ALL, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH THE PLACE

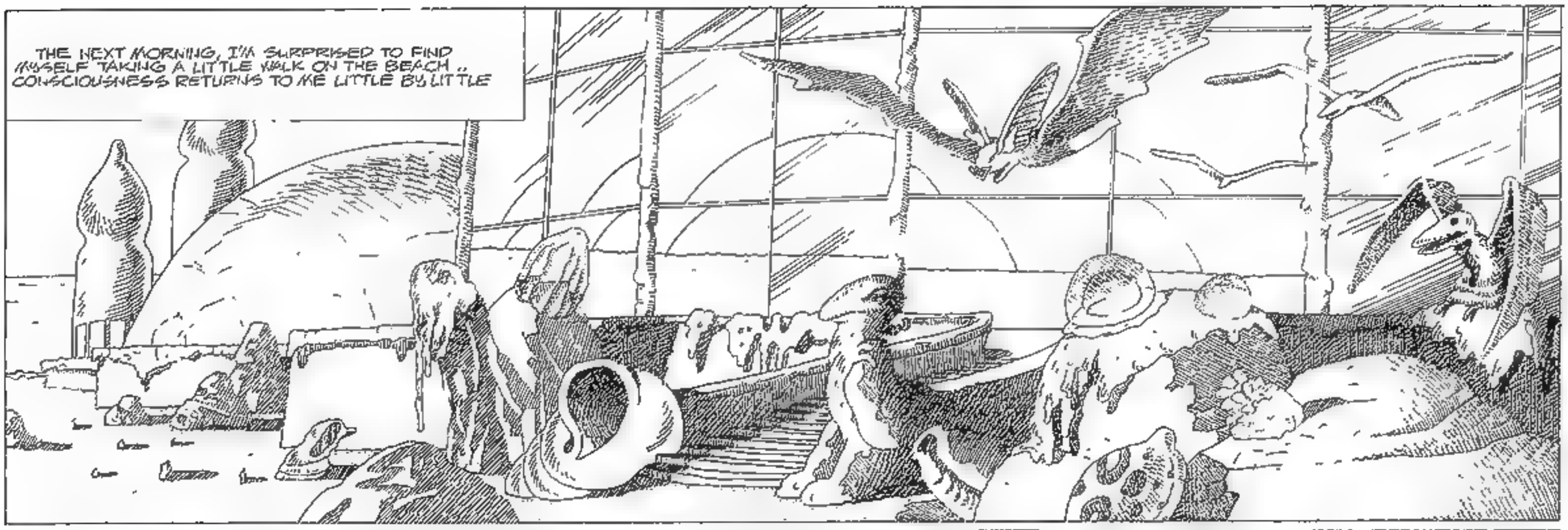
I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT A [illegible] WAS BIZARRE [illegible] AT LEAST I SAY WHAT I THINK!

THE WIND BLOWS HARDER AND HARDER! THE TIDE COMES UP! IT IS 5:00

IT'S RAINING! HURRY CHILDREN, INTO THE CAVE!

YOU SAW IT, DIDN'T YOU! THIS IS AWFUL! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

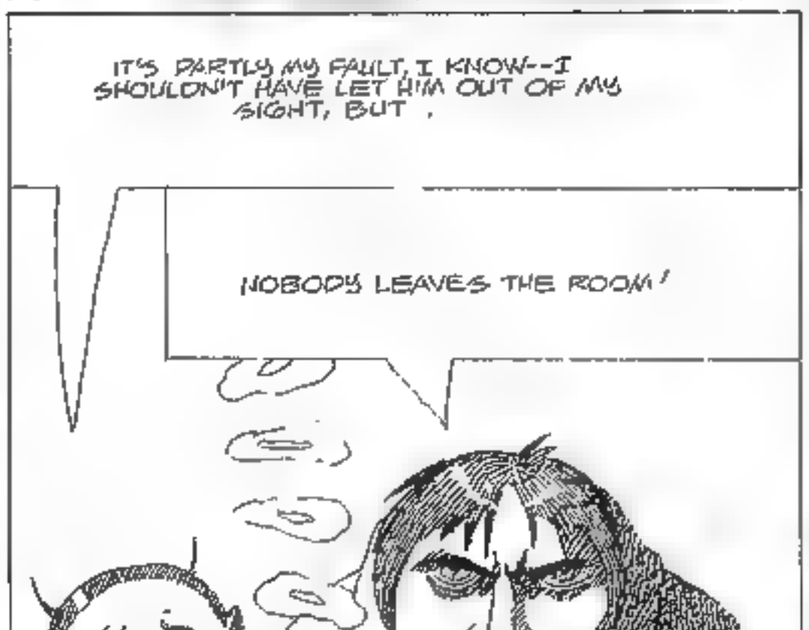
IT'S ALL MY FAULT! I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU, THERE'S A SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGE UNDER EACH ROCK WHICH DIRECTLY TO THAT MIGHT RESULT HAVE BEEN FORES


THE NEXT MORNING, I'M SURPRISED TO FIND MYSELF TAKING A LITTLE WALK ON THE BEACH .. CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNING TO ME LITTLE BY LITTLE

SUDDENLY AT 9:05

SOMEONE'S MISSING! I KNOW IT EVEN WITHOUT HAVING TO CALL THE ROLL! WHO ISN'T HERE?

FORTUNATELY, I HAVE MY LIST!— #444 - THE SAD MAN - ISN'T HERE!


IT'S PARTLY MY FAULT, I KNOW--I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET HIM OUT OF MY SIGHT, BUT .
NOBODY LEAVES THE ROOM!

MAYBE HE'S OFF GALLIVANTING
WHY PANIC? HE MUST KNOW WHAT HE WANTS, AFTER ALL..

WELL, I'M OFF! I WANT TO CLEAR THIS MATTER UP!

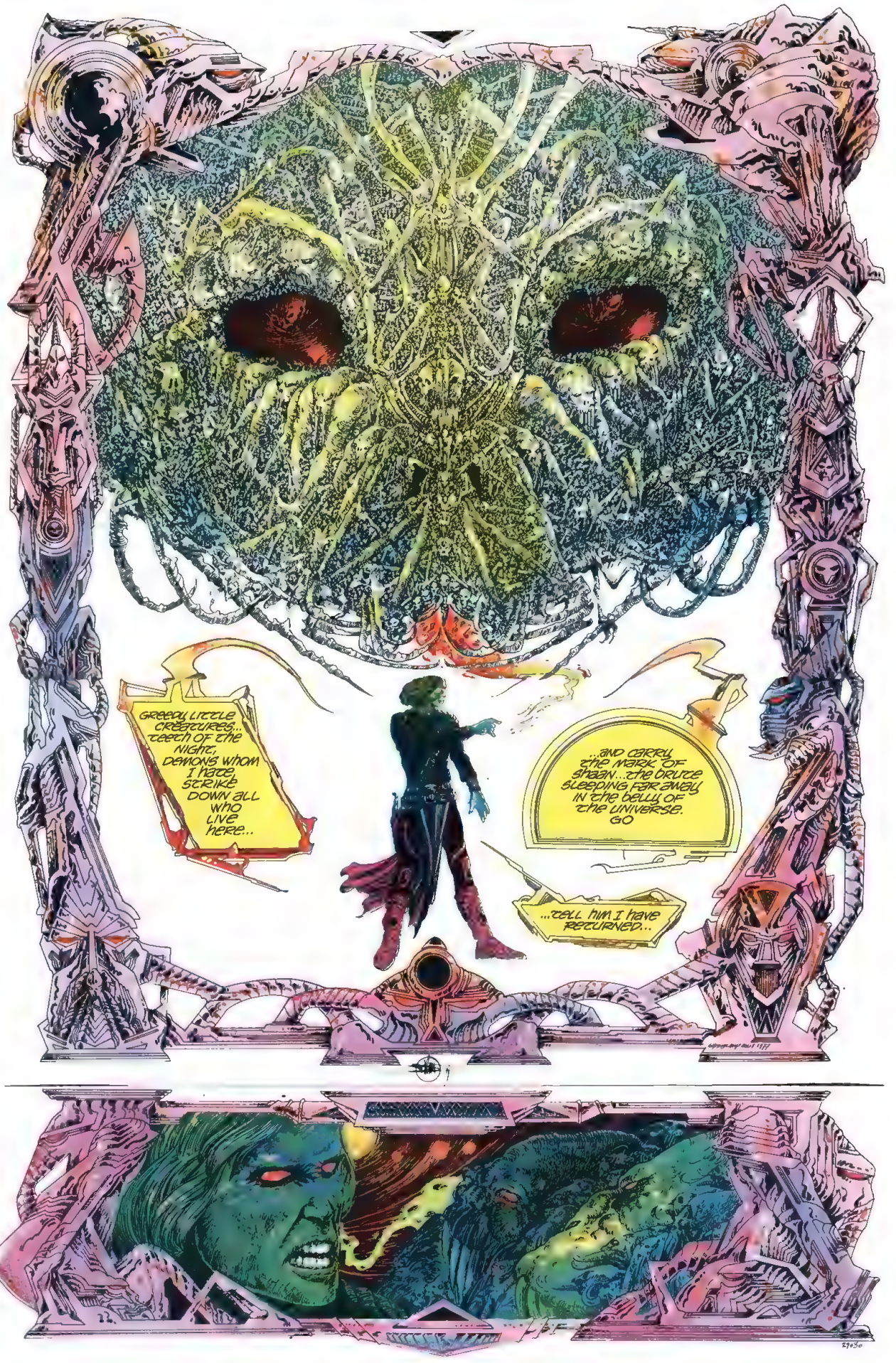
THIS IS HIS ROOM...

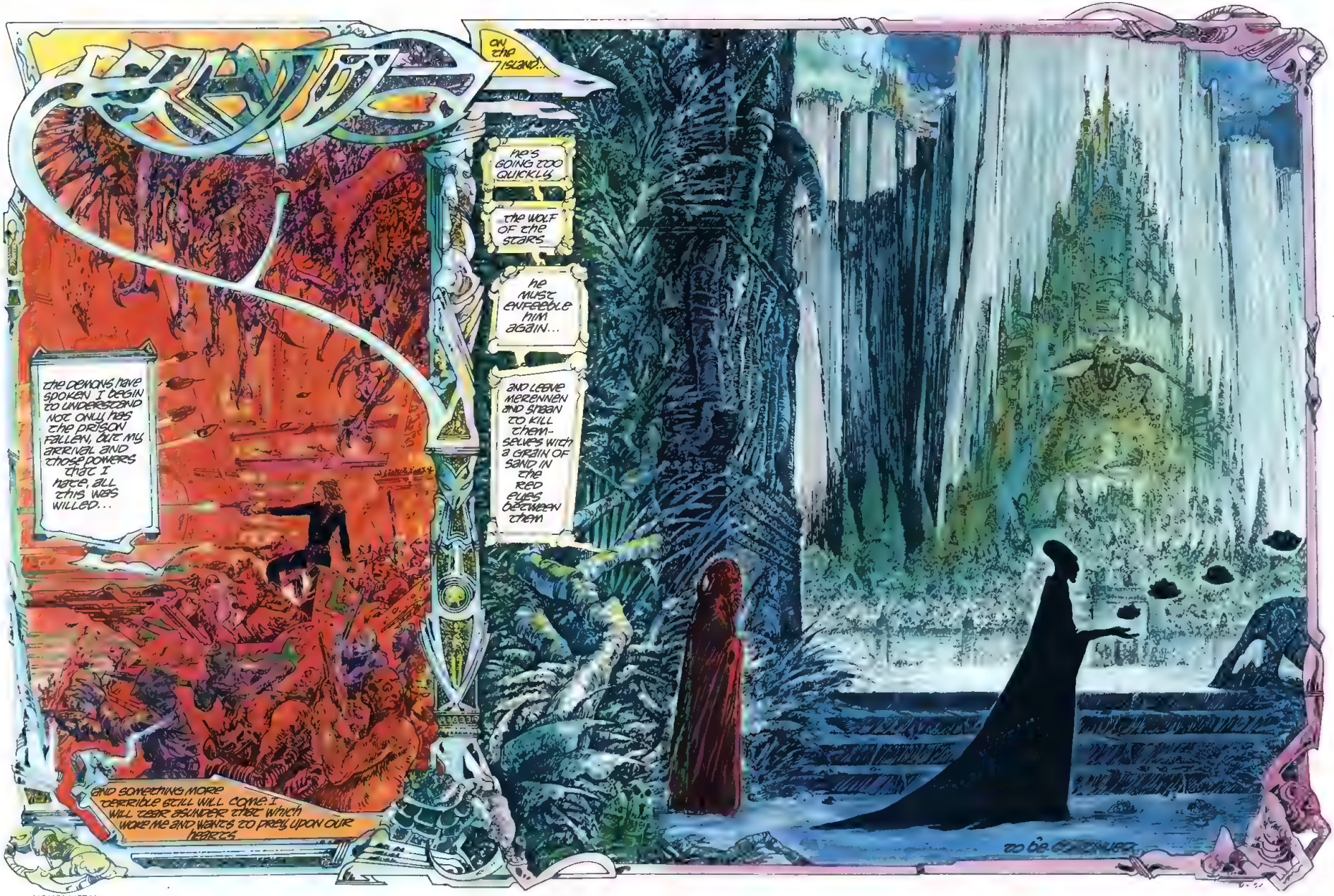
ARE YOU GOING IN?

NO, I'LL STAY HERE TO STOP THE OTHERS BARGING IN.. YOU GO!

ART: NICOLE CLAVELOUX
STORY: ZHA

TO BE CONTINUED


GREEDY LITTLE CREATURES... TEETH OF THE NIGHT, DEMONS WHOM I HATE, STRIKE DOWN ALL WHO LIVE HERE...
...AND CARRY THE MARK OF SHAAN...THE BRUTE SLEEPING FAR AWAY IN THE BELLY OF THE UNIVERSE. GO
...TELL HIM I HAVE RETURNED...


ON THE ISLAND...
HE'S GOING TOO QUICKLY
THE WOLF OF THE STARS
HE MUST ENFEEBLE HIM AGAIN...
AND LEAVE MERENNEN AND SHAAN TO KILL THEM-SELVES WITH A GRAIN OF SAND IN THE RED EYES BETWEEN THEM
THE DEMONS HAVE SPOKEN I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND NOT ONLY HAS THE PRISON FALLEN, BUT MY ARRIVAL AND THOSE POWERS THAT I HATE, ALL THIS WAS WILLED...
AND SOMETHING MORE TERRIBLE STILL WILL COME. I WILL TEAR ASUNDER THAT WHICH WORE ME AND WANTS TO PREY UPON OUR HEARTS.
TO BE CONTINUED

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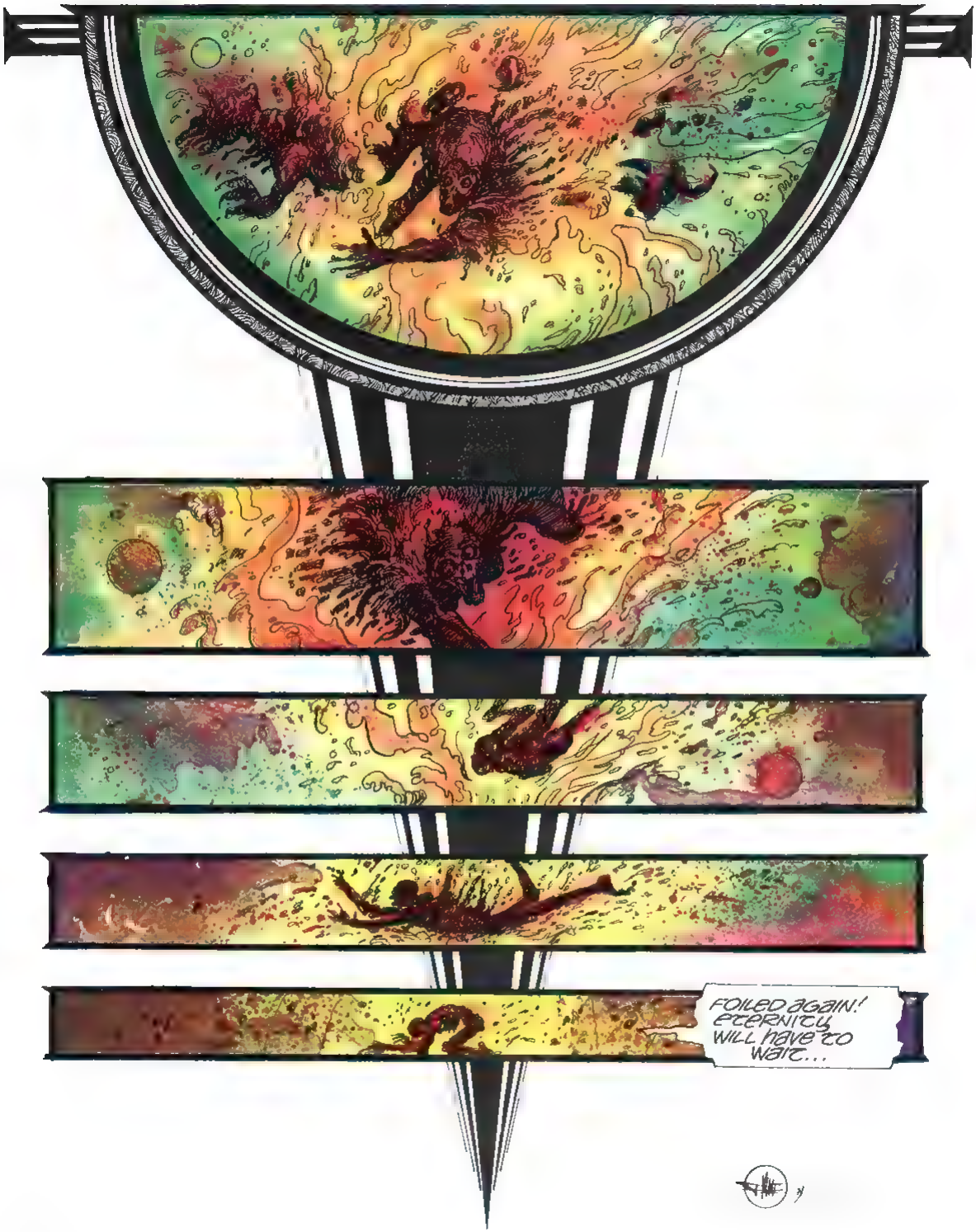
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DAWN OF THE DEAD

by George Romero and Susanna Sparrow

"Do you believe the dead are returning to life—and attacking the living?" Dr. Foster asked pointedly. The power of his words over the airways sent a shock wave throughout the entire newsroom. They had been reading those words all day—but to hear them—it gave them a new solidarity, a new reality.

The two big men, in their military regalia, gazed out across the sprawling mall.

"It's Christmastime down there, buddy," Roger said with wonder.

"Fat city, brother. How we gonna work it?"

"We get into the department stores up here," Roger plotted. "They prob'ly have their own escalators inside."

"Let's check those keys," Peter suggested

At this point, the two troopers had a narrow-minded objective get as many supplies as possible. No one stopped to think about what would fit into the small helicopter, which barely held its human passengers. They greedily headed toward the administration corridor and moved quickly down the hall toward the maintenance office

As they left the balcony, a Zombie staggered out of one of the open stores several yards away from where they had been standing It was followed by a second creature, a female without an arm Steadily, menacingly, they moved along the balcony toward the open corridor

In the maintenance office, the troopers compared the keys against the coded map on the wall.

"Seventy-two…U and D," Roger called out as he pored over the map. "Here it is…."

He and Peter checked the keys and Peter found the corresponding numbers.

"Here," he said, holding it out toward Roger.

"Let's hope it's right."

"Look here," Peter said, pointing to the map "These numbers must all be locks. Front, side, back outside, must be like loading docks. But what are these?"

He pointed to several numbered spots which seemed to be within the big Porter's department store that they were studying

"Washroom?" Roger guessed. "Equipment… I dunno. "

While Peter still stared at the map, Roger moved off toward the electrical control panel.

"I guess these gotta be the gates," Peter surmised

Roger wandered around the room cheerfully. He noted something on the control panel with a smile and turned toward Peter

"How about a little music?"

"What?" Peter asked, totally taken back by the frivolity of the statement.

The big trooper moved up behind his blond partner. One of the controls on the panel was marked MUSIC TAPE The master switch was in the off position. Another switch was marked FLOOR EXHIBITS and a series of others were marked ESCALATORS There were dozens of master switches, which were all in the off mode

"Power switches," Peter said to himself

"The music might cover the noise we make," Roger said practically.

"Hit 'em all," Peter said magnanimously. "Might as well have power in everything. We might need it."

With a gleam in his eye, Roger hit all the switches one at a time

Throughout the mall, the dull, droning sound of Muzak poured out through the loudspeakers.

Upstairs, the curious sound reached a startled Fran. She snapped the rifle into her hands, ready to fire, but she couldn't stop her hands from shaking. She had been standing, one ear cocked to the strange music below, just inside the storage area. Now she stepped into the firestair and tried to see through the darkness. The sounds of the insipid music drifted up toward her.

"Stephen," she cried, leaning into the storage area again. "Stephen!"

His mind still fuzzy from his long-needed rest, Steve roused himself. At first he thought he had been dreaming about the music (which sounded unbelievably, just like his dentist's office), and the frantic call of Fran's. He opened his eyes and for a moment he couldn't place the big, cold room filled with cartons that he was in. Then he remembered and jumped up to find Fran.

He found her just inside the storage area, her eyes straining in the darkness, the rifle gripped to her breast. She looked so tiny in comparison to the big rifle, and she was shuddering with fear. Steve led her into the larger room and closed the door.

"Where the hell are those guys?" he asked, still half-asleep and rubbing his eyes. "What the hell is going on around here?"

Fran had calmed down sufficiently to try to explain what had transpired since Steve fell asleep

"You mean they're actually going to raid the department store? What do they expect to do with the stuff from there?"

"That's just it," she told him, a look of fear in her eyes. "It's as if they've lost all perspective. We just wanted to stop here for some food and rest, or so that's what I thought. But they act like they're on some kind of secret mission. I swear, they're acting like a bunch of kids playing cops and robbers!"

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Steve reached over and pulled Fran close to him

"Don't worry," he told her in a voice that he hoped sounded calm. "They're not *that* crazy."

"Then what are we going to do? They said if they didn't come back to leave without them ..how long should we wait. .."

She collapsed in a heap, crying and shaking at the same time.

All Steve could do was hold her to him tightly He knew that if he tried to explain anything, he could break down as well.

Meanwhile, on the first floor of the mall, it looked as if a giant hand had turned on its own special mechanical toy. Only it wasn't a toy it was an entire shopping center. The automobile turntable started spinning; the great escalators began to move up and down. Two of the living dead, caught just starting up a stalled escalator, fell and rolled down as the mechanical steps began to move

As if it were a carnival come alive, lights blinked on the exhibits, mechanical window displays began their robot-like motions The Zombies, bothered by the Muzak, wandered about the floor in increased confusion. Some of them swatted ineffectually at the moving exhibits

Disturbed by the movement, the tropical birds housed in the floor-to-ceiling cages woke up, chirping and squawking for their feed.

In a pet shop, puppies and kittens in a window display whined and scrambled over one another in fright at the noise, the motion, and the tottering creatures.

All that was missing was the real-life action of human shoppers. On one of the floor exhibits, a rear-projection movie started

A narrator spoke in a friendly voice' ". and for a price that anyone can afford, you can live in these luxurious new homes by Brandon Fully electric, central air..."

The newly distracted Zombies started strutting around at a quicker pace, bumping into each other and the moving displays. Some tried to return the way they came in, but only bounced off the glass door. The one who had been circling endlessly had fallen down and his head was wedged between the ground and the door, preventing anyone else from entering or leaving

In the maintenance office, the troopers readied themselves for their raid Peter secured the vital key ring to his utility belt and they moved out

Roger's mind was a million miles away as he moved through the door into the corridor. He was still light-headed from the thought of all those wonderful goodies waiting for him downstairs. He was totally unprepared for his head-on meeting with one of the Zombies from the balcony Startled, he ducked back into the room. The Zombie, blindly reaching out with clutched hands, rounded the corner and appeared in the doorway. With precision accuracy, Peter raised his gun and fired two shots cleanly through the creature's head.

On the top of the firestair, Fran jumped as the sound of the shots reverberated through the enormous mall.

"Jesus Christ," Steve screamed, grabbing the rifle from the petrified woman. "They're maniacs."

He looked long and hard at Fran. He was torn between staying here with her and charging downstairs to see what was going on. Fran needed protection, but he also needed to prove to her, to himself, and to those two macho supermen downstairs that he could join the battle.

Fran saw the moment of indecision in his eyes.

"Stephen, don't go down there," she pleaded. "Stephen, please!"

"It's all right," he said calmly, starting to make his way down the stairs

In the corridor of the administration offices below, Roger and Peter were stepping over the corpse.

"Whadda ya think?" Roger asked as the second Zombie, the armless female, came into his view. He fired his weapon and the creature fell in a heap. As if nothing had happened, he continued his conversation

"Bag it or try for it?" he asked his comrade

"You game?" Peter asked

Roger nodded and the two men ran down the hall toward the mall With their rifles poised, they seemed like commandos on an important raid.

All that was missing was the blare of the trumpets as Roger and Peter charged into battle. The enemy wandered around the first floor, attracted by the sound but confused by the sudden intrusion of the noise into their quiet domain In misguided, staggering strides, they walked this way and that, glazed, vacant eyes passing by the stores and shops with their glittering array of goodies.

Several of the Zombies walked toward the escalator, which in its dormant state had been easy to negotiate. But now, the moving escalators tossed the Zombies this way and that Some of them tried going up the down escalator, while those few creatures who moved onto the up escalator fell against each other from the movement. They seemed like tumbling pins in a bowling alley.

One of the Zombies who fell on the escalator was carried upward despite its awkward position. Another managed to keep its balance holding onto the handrail

And unbeknownst to Roger and Peter, several creatures had begun to move up the step of a stationary stairway that ran from the first to the second floor and that was located at a point at the other end of the mall from the administration offices.

Meanwhile, a sweating, nervous Steve was cautiously making his way down the steps of the firestair. His rifle ready, his palms dripping, he tried to control his jittery nerves. Fran looked anxiously from the top landing.

Several hundred yards away, Roger and Peter were barreling toward the huge gate that locked off the entrance to Porter's. The two troopers came to a crashing halt. Four or five Zombies were staggering their way down a side concourse toward the troopers. They were about three hundred feet away.

Roger kept his rifle leveled off in the direction of the creatures while Peter tried the lock at the middle of the big roll gate.

Beads of perspiration formed on his forehead as he fumbled with the key for a moment until he finally found the proper one. When it sunk in with a click into the receptacle that was right at the floor and the tumbler turned successfully, Peter sighed in relief.

"All right!" he yelled to his friend.

Creeping toward them, however, was the creature who had fallen on the escalator. His ghoulish companion, the one who was able to ride the whole way without falling, was also approaching the two unsuspecting troopers

Suddenly, to Roger's surprise, the head of the standing Zombie became visible from Roger's perspective. He raised his gun and aimed for the creature's forehead.

Peter tried to lift the roll gate but it wouldn't move. It was still locked.

"You bastard," Peter screamed in frustration.

"What?" Roger asked, his attention focused on the approaching ghouls

"Still locked...on the side," Peter said, pointing to another assembly. He moved to the far side of the gate. The same key fit and Peter repeated the process.

But Roger could not share his joy. His attention was on the creature riding the escalator, almost near the top. Just as Roger was about to shoot, something caught his eye.

The fallen Zombies, who up until now could not be seen behind the escalator railwall, suddenly came tumbling out onto the balcony floor.

A shaken Roger took fire, but his aim was inaccurate The pressures were starting to build and for one moment he stopped to think about the idiocy of what he was doing. That was his downfall, because it disturbed his concentration His shot hit the standing Zombie in the neck, tearing half the throat away. The creature was thrown off balance enough to lose its footing. It fell back down the escalator, but before it reached the bottom, it stopped rolling. The steps carried it back up toward the second floor again It was still very much alive.

Two more creatures on the balcony struggled to stand. Roger watched them and then looked back over his shoulder. To his horror he saw that Zombies from the side concourse were about a hundred and fifty feet away.

Working against time, Peter turned the key in the lock, but again the gate would not budge .It moved slightly, and Peter could see

that it was free from the middle and far right mechanism but that there was a third lock on the far left. He moved to it quickly.

As if they possessed some kind of primitive antennae, the other creatures on the first floor began to take note of the action upstairs and they, too, started to move

Zombies surrounded the troopers on all sides now. Those who had managed to climb the stationary stairway were beginning to reach the second floor, but they were far down the main balcony. In order to reach the entrance to Porter's they would have to pass the administrative corridor.

Roger steadied his nerves and collected his thoughts. In the back of his mind he was wondering what the hell was taking Peter so damn long

He fired his rifle again and one of the nearby Zombies fell in a heap.

His confidence restored, he looked around for more of the enemy to mow down.

"For God's sake, Stephen," Fran called down the stairway upon hearing Roger's shot. "Let's get up on the roof," she cried out to him desperately.

At the middle landing, Steve stared down into the darkness below. More gunfire could be heard from the mall He was stuck· part of him wanted to run up to Fran and escape with her in the chopper The other part wanted to go down and get into the action.

"It's all right," he said, trying to convince himself as well "Those things don't move fast enough to catch us." The last part of his sentence was practically drowned out by the staccato beat of the gunfire.

With a loud rumble, the large gate finally freed itself from its bonds and rolled up. Peter ducked into the store even as the gate was still rising. The momentum of the heavy metal carried the lip out of Peter's grasp and it rolled out of his reach. It jerked up into its fully open position and rolled back down slightly, but still Peter could not reach the lip. It was over ten feet to the ceiling. The bottom of the gate rested about three feet above Peter's outstretched fingertips.

Panicking for the first time since the whole horrible situation evolved, Peter turned to see the Zombie advancing.

Roger had just dropped another with a clean shot through the head, then he backed into the archway of Porter's entranceway. Desperately, Peter looked around for something to stand on in order to reach the elusive gate.

Steadily, the Zombies advanced toward the arch.

Peter grabbed a small counter used to display shoes, but it was deceptively heavy and he called out to Roger.

"Here . come on . "

Unfortunately, Roger had to abandon his strategic post at the arch in order to help Peter drag over the little counter They pulled it to a point just at the side of the open arch and Peter instantly jumped up on top of it. At that instant, a Zombie rounded the corner and grabbed at Peter's leg.

Startled, Peter started to kick, and the awkward motion caused him to fall off the little counter. Gracefully, he landed on his feet, but he was out on the balcony beyond the arch. Quickly, Roger brought his rifle butt around against the creature's head and the Zombie fell backward, but it was still alive.

A few other creatures were only a few feet from Peter, who was now unarmed as his gun sat on the small counter inside the store. Roger leveled off his rifle but couldn't fire, since Peter was in his line of vision. Suddenly, Peter made a move, and like a football player, cut to the left and then to the right. Diving, he threw himself at one of the creatures, carrying it into the store.

Roger, all the while, had been firing on the advancing Zombies, dropping one and then another. "Behind you, behind you," Peter cried to Roger as he jumped back up on the counter

The creature trapped in the store had knocked over a cosmetics display, and tubes of lipsticks, compacts, cylinders of eyeliner and mascara rolled around under its feet. Finally, the creature leaned against the glass case that displayed false eyelashes and plastic nails and was able to regain its footing.

In an instant, Roger turned and fired. The creature fell. In that time, Peter was able to grab the lip of the roll gate and started to bring it down

During all the commotion, several creatures gathered in the archway. They stood there, clutching at the air with clawlike hands. One stood in the middle of the path of the roll gate, blocking its downward progress

Roger took careful aim and fired point-blank into the forehead of the Zombie who was blocking the gate. It flew backward, crashing into a few of its brothers. As the gate started to lower, the clutching hands of the other Zombies seemed to reach out and try to strangle Roger for killing one of their own. Roger dropped his rifle and ran to the cage now to try and help pull it down. Peter, still holding onto the lip, jumped off the counter to get more leverage.

The two troopers were now sweating profusely. Large areas of dark were spreading under their arms and on the back of their uniforms. They were struggling to move the gate steadily down It was now only four feet from the floor, but the creatures, who seemed to feel no pain, were throwing themselves in the path of the descending gate, making it more difficult One of them tried to crawl underneath and its torso just got through as the gate slammed down against its chest. Its arms grabbed for Peter's legs and its mouth gaped open. Its mutilated body prevented the gate from engaging in the floor mechanisms.

Roger let go of the cage as Peter tried to hold it against the creatures outside. Both men were exhausted now, and barely had enough strength to pull the gate down, let alone battle the Zombies But some inner resource, some extra dose of adrenaline coursed through their veins. Grabbing his rifle, Roger brought the butt straight down crushing the pawing Zombie's skull The Zombie went limp and Roger tried to push it clear off the gate, but the pressure was too enormous

"Let up a little. .let up a little," he gasped to Peter

Peter let up the pressure and the gate rose a few inches. But, as more and more Zombies appeared outside, they too clutched at the roll cage. Although the openings in the grid were only big enough for their fingers, their hands could not reach through However, the force of their pushing in unison caused the gate to go higher and higher. .more than Peter intended it to go to clear the obstructing corpse

With his rifle butt, Roger managed to push the dead Zombie clear except for one of its arms. From outside, a creature's hand suddenly grabbed Roger's weapon.

For a moment, the macabre thought passed through Roger's mind· it was like the tug-o-war game he used to play with his friends when he was younger. Only now the stakes were life or death!

"Come on...come on," Peter cried out He was having a harder time holding the gate and it inched upward, out of his reach

Roger decided to let go of the gun barrel and the creature flew back into the crowd, brandishing its prize. Roger grabbed for the gate to help Peter and they tried again to crush it

"The arm...that arm's in the way," Peter told him.

Roger squatted and managed to throw the dead Zombie's arm (now only held onto the body with a thin strand of muscle) clear

With a slight shiver of revulsion at what he had just done, Roger grabbed the gate again. Now, with both of the men focusing their attention and strength on the gate, it moved down more steadily.

At the last moment, another clutching arm jutted into the store, but when the gate hit it, it withdrew. Finally, and not a minute too soon, the gate clicked solidly into place

The two troopers stepped back from the gate and collapsed against another glass display case. This one held sunglasses, suntan lotion, and various vacation time necessities. The men gathered their strength and watched in horror as the creatures still moaned and gurgled, slamming against the gate. Their fingers clutched futilely at the grid, but they were unable to budge it

"Well ..we're in. Now, how the hell we gonna get back?" Roger asked, scanning the department store. About ten or twelve Zombies tried to get in. Several others made their way along the balcony. Roger also noted in disgust that six lay dead along the floor, their heads bleeding profusely from gunshot wounds or smashed skulls

"Let's go shopping first," Peter said, calm, cool, and collected once again. ●

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

HM #1/APRIL, 1977: With Space Punks, the first chapters of Corben's Den and Bode's Sunpot, an excerpt from the best-selling fantasy novel *The Sword of Shannara* Harzak, and more ($5.00)

HM #2/MAY, 1977 Introducing Roger, the paranoid puppet Virgo the cosmic maiden, Russian astronauts, Conquering Armies, the ultimate rock festival, while Harzak, Sunpot, and Den continue ($4.00)

HM #3/JUNE, 1977 Features *Night Images* poetry by Conan's creator Robert E. Howard with illustrations by Corben Macedo's Rockblitz the highly praised Shells, the first chapter of Davis's World Apart more Den Sunpot and Harzak ($3.00)

HM #4/JULY, 1977 Is a must for Moebius fans with 12 pages of Harzak and his I Spy saga The Long Tomorrow also the end of Sunpot further adventures of Den the psychic Nep Simo and the horrible Gold Queen ($3.00)

HM #13/APRIL, 1978. Big deal first anniversary issue with 30-page insert from Paradise 9 by all concerned Also amidst the king must die death's duel and the undead Barbarella gives birth Oh and the sexual acrobatic epilogue to Den ($2.00)

HM #14/MAY, 1978. Does in Urm the Mad, locates El Dorado goes to pieces on a bicycle buys a cannibal clock, time-travels, and cerebrally tap-dances with Nino Not to mention Orion and Barbarella ($2.00)

HM #15/JUNE 1978 This time we go too far For instance the exotic new Corben Shahrazad the neurotic Evolution, the ecstatic More Than Human the erotic Barbarella and the eralic Them Changes And an excerpt from Sabre and the origins of Heiman ($2.00)

HM #5/AUGUST, 1977: In which the saga of Polonius begins, The Long Tomorrow concludes, World Apart and Den continue, all amidst talking plants, samurai puppets, sex, and violence ($3.00)

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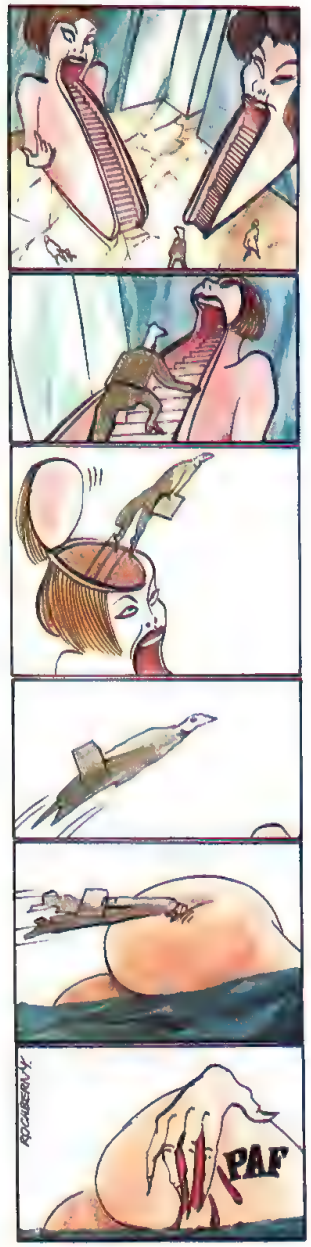


one foot in EDEN

by Mark Wheatley

Fernandez shuffled along. The bottle was cold in his hand as he wobbily sighted through the hole to its interior.

"Emptyth." The slurred word ran away with his tongue. "Apslurb" was the next thing it said, and that amused him. He raised the bottle to his lips to drain it for the hundredth time, but once again his tongue started working.

"[illegible]b."

"Asmody."

"Sizelburp and Rose."

"Huh?"

Enough was enough. Hell, drunk or not, it was still his mouth, and he'd damn well say what he wanted. Might be a bit slurred, but that's to be expected from a connoisseur such as himself.

His resolve bolstered him to wobble up against the wall and headed out of the alley. But he forgot to open his eyes and his fifth step (he always counted them) introduced him to a garbage can and tripped him face to face with the pavement.

That's when he thought he heard it.

But the rocking trash can was just too noisy. The metallic rumblings effectively drowned any other sound in the alley.

One hand on the bottle, the other braced against the wall, he managed to get his legs under him again. A moment of shuffling and he was out of the alley and on the sidewalk.

Then he was sure he heard it, and shivered.

It was a voice, saying those strange words that had attempted to commandeer his tongue earlier. Bewildered, he tottered about on an invisible axis, the bottle acting as his moon. When he was facing the street again he burped. Nothing—and nobody. Then he heard it again. He snapped his head around and instantly regretted it, as the world took a swim and a wave of nausea washed him to the pavement. He landed upright, sitting against the wall. And then, he'd be goddamned if his tongue didn't start doing it again.

"Bezelbub."

"Asmodius."

"Mobius."

"Roxnoooooth."

"Mythopokion."

"Burp."

The last sound he could claim some credit for, but his wine-besotted mind wouldn't admit to having come up with the first five. He was getting frustrated. Then he heard it again, a little voice inside his head, and it said: "He's too drunk."

"Try the cat," it continued.

"Perfect," answered another voice.

Fernandez watched the cat scamper across the street and stalk obliviously over his outstretched legs. It disappeared in the darkness of the alley.

Once more he pushed himself against the wall to a standing position, and leaned cautiously around the corner of the building.

The cat was dancing. Eyes aglow with hellfire, electric sparks arching along standing hairs. And those words purred forth from the feline lips.

"Beelzebub."

"Asmodeus."

"Mobius."

"Ra Deva Sa."

"Mephisto."

The cat became dancing flame. Green burning,

MJHEARLEY '7

acid smelling. The doors of eternity seemed to crack open, allowing frigid waves to crash into the world. And then, with a sudden burst of otherworldly brilliance: He was here.

His cloaked form raged with the flames of holocaust and his gaze was apocalyptic.

His first steps took him beyond the city and the skies shed tears amid their stormy fists, following him cross the continent.

She was somewhere ahead in the swamp, and Jolief wouldn't return to the house without at least seeing her. For too many years the family had chided her belief in the phantom's existence. But she was there. Jolief had known in her soul that it was more than a dre

Memil carried h the open

Jolief glanc abou her, hardly aware of h surroundings, ever sense alert only for that ethereal form. So she ignored the string moss and the gun metal haze drifting in cotton patches over the peat bogs ahead.

Jolief leaned forward and slapped Memil an affectionate pat on his serpentine neck. Even when she was this intent on a search, Jolief was aware of Memil, the most beautiful dragon left in the world. And he was hers. The fact that Memil had never matured, never sprouted the wondrous wings of a Senior Dragon, did not, in Jolief's opinion, detract from his singular beauty.

Suddenly Jolief's body warmed in a rush of passion. A sensual aura set her almost aglow. Memil's vast form shivered beneath her. Jolief slowly eased herself back and forth along the ridge of Memil's back, breathing deeply of the heavy air of the swamp. And as her body began to respond in burning waves, Jolief's eyes beheld it as it dropped from the sky.

Sarha danced. Not to music from the house—but to the beat of the calf's dead heart. To the flap of the wingless bird. All the while singing in tongues known only to those ancient souls who once walked the earth.

Her bare arms crossed naked breasts in a supernatural frenzy of passion.

All about her was her partner, flapping with whimsical motions the cloth that seemed imbued with unnatural life. And between the flash of flesh and the coil of cloth bobbed the *orb*. Red, amber, gold. Rose, pink, crimson, orange.

And at the moment of her deep, ragged gasp, the orb dripped blood.

And in the moment that he stepped across the Blue Ridge mountains and onto the fringe of the dismal swamp, the orb dripped blood.

And in the moment of Jolief's climax, the orb crashed into the murky waters, leaving behind a crystallized trail of blood.

All across the universe suns bled. Freeing the forces bought with the passions of two very different women caught in the throes of a cosmic lust. Jolief and Sarha had broken barriers.

"Beelzebub."

"Asmodeus."

"Mobius."

"Ra Deva Sa."

"Mephisto."

One step from his goal, He stood defeated. There was nothing left to do. The orb had dripped blood. "Damn that drunk," his hellfire thoughts raged. Just one moment more and the earth girl would have been stopped.

The sky roared.

He looked up.

The mighty fist fell.

"My God!" In the dim light, Keith could barely make out the shape he knew so well. Sarha lay amid the jumbled mess, tangled in the sheet beside a slimy ball of some sort.

"Sarha!" The word was more a plea than a name. Keith pushed his way over tumbled furniture to where his wife lay. As he bent at her side, brushing her crimson hair from her face, a breeze brought his attention to the bay windows. They were shattered; wood and glass fragments were scattered far across the sloping lawn. He could see the moon reflected off the broken glass as far away as the smokehouse. There had been an explosion. He'd heard it and had come from the hall, leaving astonished guests in his wake as he ran.

Sarha had somehow escaped harm. And God, he was thankful for that.

Her eyes fluttered open then. Long lashes making dark ovals of her eyes.

"Sarha."

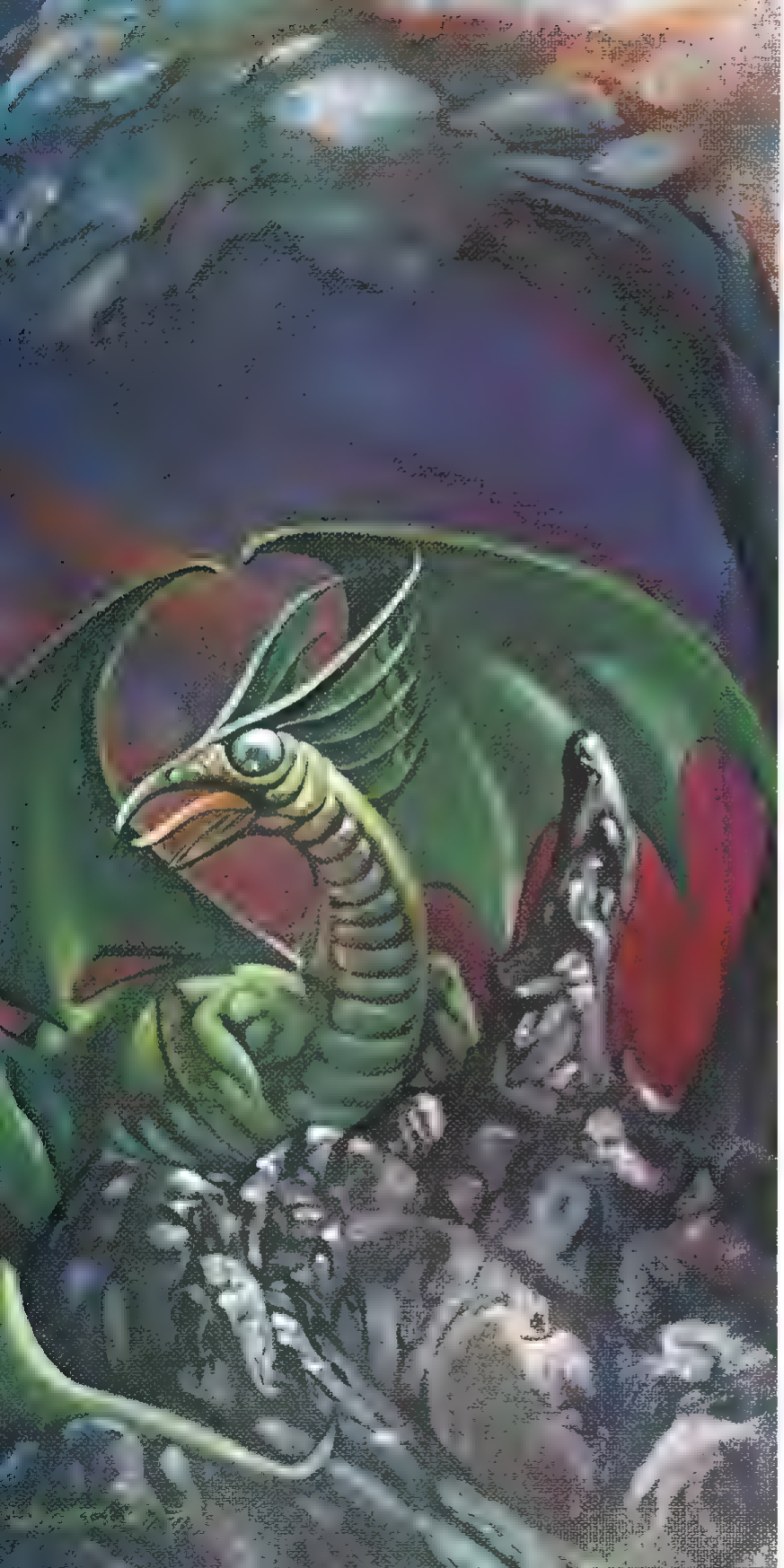
She smiled and Keith crushed her against him; holding her for proof of her existence.

"Keith." When he just squeezed harder, Sarha added, "I saved the dragon. Memil can mate."

Then it was clear to him. Those strange dreams she was constantly telling him about. Of another world, of another life. Sarha believing that she was someone called Jolief. And a pet—a dragon. A dragon forever stuck in prepuberty. The last male dragon. Unable to fertilize the eggs laid by the several remaining females.

He hadn't believed it. But how could he deny this? As he held his sobbing wife his gaze drifted across the shambles of his library once again. The moonlight was glinting off the orb and the pool of liquid surrounding it. He dipped a finger into the stuff and raised it to see it better. It was blood.

It was then that he knew that his wife had broken barriers, because suddenly he forgot his immediate concern for Sarha, as the universe was laid bare to his mind. Voices of numberless creatures were there to be understood on their primary level. The mind was no longer a prison.



The mind that had worn the five names, that could explain, was finally dead, so Keith and Sarha would never connect the kilometer-wide crater at the north edge of the swamp with the evening's strange happenings. Never would they know that but for a small amount of wine, it would have been their home destroyed.

People on the way to work the next morning stepped over Fernandez for over an hour before a young occupational therapist stopped to check him for some sign of life. If not for her, the rats and dogs would have probably finished off the corpse for dinner. And they'd probably have gotten drunk.

As Jolief struggled up the ladder to her tree home, she smiled at the memory of her last sight of Memil.

Sitting on a cliff, high over the swamp, with newfound wings and virility, he'd stopped and trilled a quick song back to her before flying off in search of the few remaining females of his kind.

She knew the family would add this to her list of failures: that she lost the last male dragon. And the only tame one in ages, at that. But she, and Sarha, knew—it was the first of their successes.

●

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he[illegible] compound like water, composed of oxygen [illegible]gen of atomic weight 2; water enrich[illegible] studies and as a moderator [illegible]ghing much [illegible]

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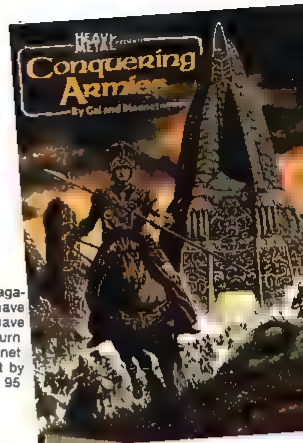

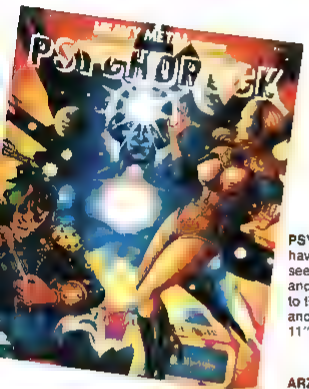

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OUR STORY TO DATE: THE ENGINEER BARNABUS, WHO HAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD NOTHING, FOLLOWS THE MYSTERIOUS ARCHER. NO ONE KNOWS WHENCE HE CAME OR WHITHER HE GOES!

WOW! TERRIFIC! FASCINATING!

WE GOING TO GO ON WALKING LIKE THIS FOR LONG?

BE PATIENT, ENGINEER BARNABUS!

MOEBIUS 77

IN FACT, THE ONLY THING KNOWN FOR SURE IS THAT HE WAS BORN IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1958 IN WEST SWISS-GERMANY AT BADEN-OOS OF A SWISS MOTHER AND A SWISS-GERMAN FATHER...

...HE BECAME A JOURNALIST ON "DEVELT," DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT DURING THE WAR IN VIETNAM. HE ACCIDENTALLY CROSSED THE LESSER TRANSTEMPORAL CIRCLE OF ANGKOR. THEN, CURIOUSLY, HE EMERGED IN THE PRESENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY... AND WAS FOUND BY A BRAHMA OF PONDY-CHERI...

HONK HONK!

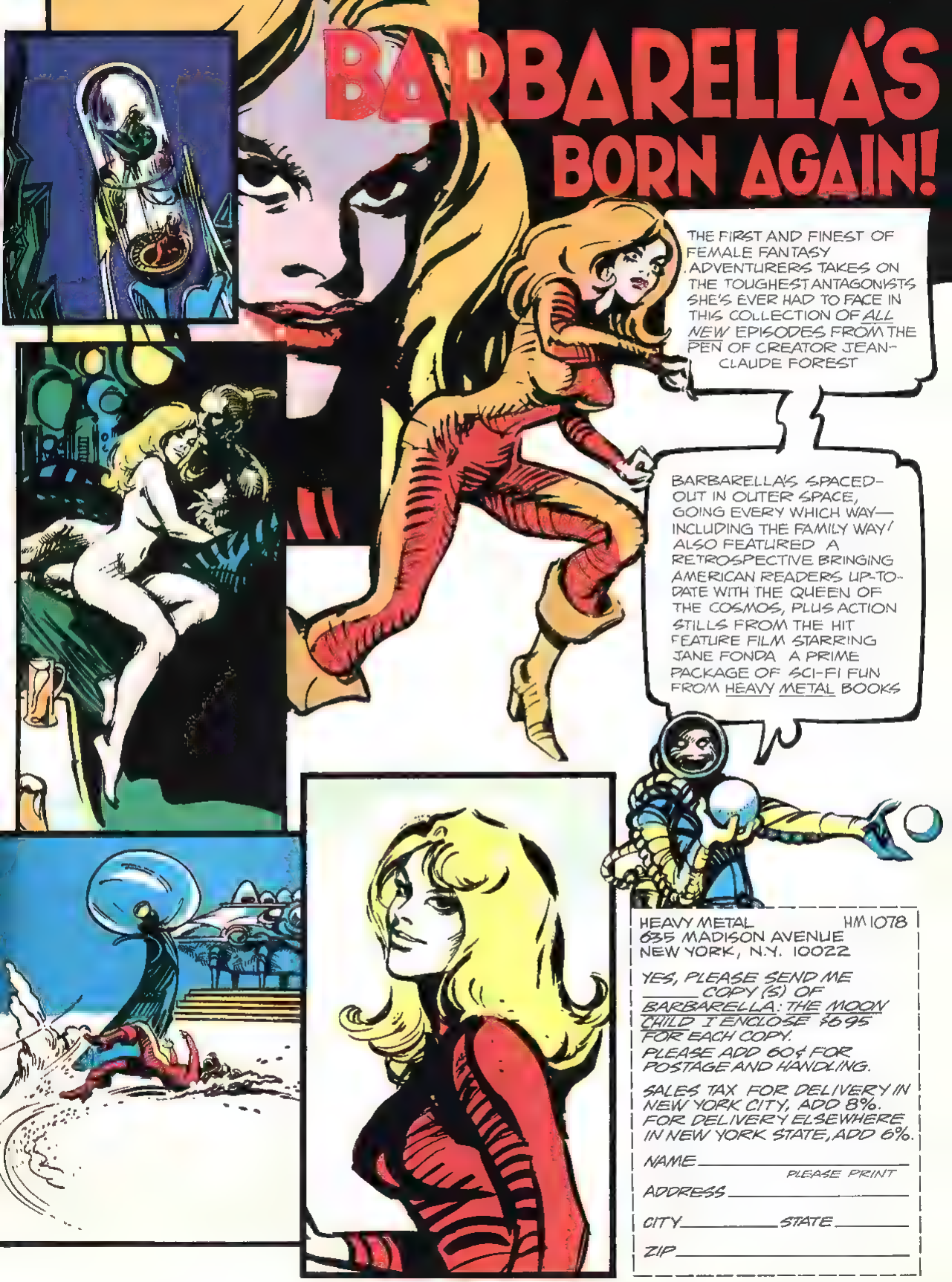
THERE, HE WAS INITIATED INTO THE EQUIVALENT OF PHASE IV AND WORKED FOR THIRTEEN YEARS IN THE MAGICAL SPATIAL LAB WHERE HE STUDIED SPECIFICALLY THE PHENOMENA OF NODAL EN-TROPY OF INTERGALACTAL TISSUE... HE SOON SET HIM-SELF UP WITH THE EXPLORER LEWIS CERN...

IT WAS DURING A ROUTINE FLIGHT INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE NEBULOUS "HAKBAH OF SALIGAA" THAT THEY DIS-COVERED THE WRECK OF THE "OTRA," THE FAMOUS AND MYTHICAL WRECK OF THE MOTHER-ARK OF THE ANCIENTS... CERN AND GRUBERT UNDER-TOOK THE EXPLORATION...

IT WAS DURING THE EXPLORATION THAT THE MAJOR DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY.

MOEBIUS77

TO BE CONTINUED


BARBARELLA'S
BORN AGAIN!
THE FIRST AND FINEST OF FEMALE FANTASY ADVENTURERS TAKES ON THE TOUGHEST ANTAGONISTS SHE'S EVER HAD TO FACE IN THIS COLLECTION OF ALL NEW EPISODES FROM THE PEN OF CREATOR JEAN-CLAUDE FOREST
BARBARELLA'S SPACED-OUT IN OUTER SPACE, GOING EVERY WHICH WAY— INCLUDING THE FAMILY WAY! ALSO FEATURED A RETROSPECTIVE BRINGING AMERICAN READERS UP-TO-DATE WITH THE QUEEN OF THE COSMOS, PLUS ACTION STILLS FROM THE HIT FEATURE FILM STARRING JANE FONDA A PRIME PACKAGE OF SCI-FI FUN FROM HEAVY METAL BOOKS
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GRASS GOBLIN

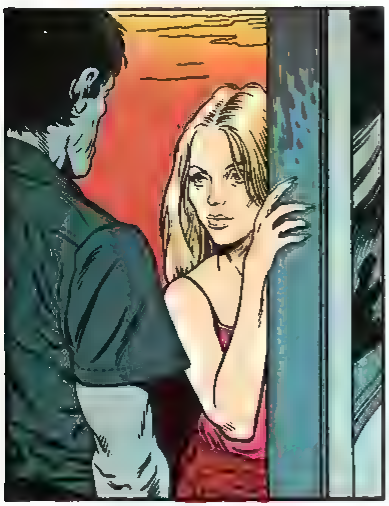
So it was there, eight months later, that Rudy found her, in that huge and ugly house off Western Avenue in Los Angeles; living with them, all of them; not just Jonah, but all of them

It was November in Los Angeles, near sundown, and unaccountably chill even for the fall in that place always near the sun. He came down the sidewalk and stopped in front

Cardboard covered the upstairs windows.

A baby carriage was overturned on the front walk.

The front door was ornately carved



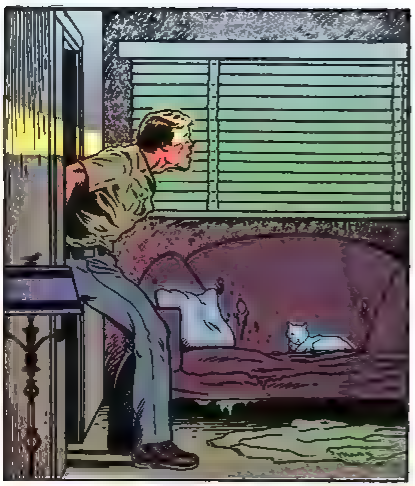
Darkness seemed to breathe heavily

Rudy shifted the duffel bag slightly on his shoulder. He was afraid of the house. He was breathing more heavily as he stood there, and a panic he could never have described tightened the fat muscles on either side of his shoulderblades. He looked up into the corners of the darkening sky, seeking a way out, but he could only go forward. Kristina was in there

Another girl answered the door.

She looked at him without speaking, her long blond hair half-obscuring her face, peering out from inside the veil of Clairol and dirt. When he asked a second time for Kris, she wet her lips in the corners, and a tic made her cheek jump. Rudy set down the duffel bag with a whump. "Kris, please," he said urgently.

The blond girl turned away and walked back into the dim hallways of the terrible old house. Rudy stood in the open doorway, and suddenly, as if the blond girl had been a barrier to it, and her departure had released it, he was assaulted, like a smack in the face, by a wall of pungent scent. It was marijuana.



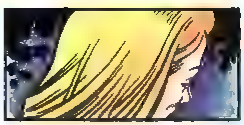
He reflexively inhaled, and his head reeled He took a step back, into the last inches of sunlight coming over the lanai apartment building, and then it was gone, and he was still buzzing, and moved forward, dragging the duffel bag behind him

He did not remember closing the front door, but when he looked, some time later, it was closed behind him

He found Kris on the third floor, lying against the wall of a dark closet. It held an infinitude of odors—dirty sweat socks as pungent as stew, fleece jackets on which the rain had dried to mildew, a mop gracious with its scent of old dust hardened to dirt, the overriding weed smell of what she had been at for no one knew how long—and it held her. As pretty as pretty could be

"Kris?"

Slowly, her head came up, and she saw him. Much later, she tracked and focused and she began to cry "Go away."



In the limpid silences of the whispering house, back and above him in the darkness, Rudy heard the sudden sound of leather wings beating furiously for a second, then nothing

Rudy crouched down beside her, his heart grown twice its size in his chest He wanted so desperately to reach her, to talk to her "Kris please . . ." She turned her head away, and with the hand that had been stroking the rabbit she slapped at him awkwardly, missing him

For an instant, Rudy could have sworn he heard the sound of someone counting heavy gold pieces, somewhere off to his right, down a passageway of the third floor But when he half turned and tried to focus his hearing on it, there was no sound

Kris was trying to crawl back farther into the closet. She was trying to smile.

He turned back, on hands and knees and he moved into the closet after her.

"The rabbit," she said languorously "You're crushing the rabbit " He looked down, his right knee was lying on the soft matted-fur head of the pink rabbit. He pulled it out from under his knee and threw it into a corner of the closet She looked at him with disgust. "You haven't changed, Rudy. Go away."

"I'm outta the army, Kris," Rudy said gently "They let me out on a medical I want you to come back, Kris, please."

She would not listen. He moved his lips several times, as though trying to recall words he had already spoken, and he lit a cigarette, and sat in the open doorway of the closet, waiting for her to come back to him. He had waited eight months for her to come back to him, since he had been inducted and she had written **Rudy, I'm going to live with Jonah at The Hill**

There was the sound of something very tiny, hurking in the infinitely black shadow where the top step of the stairs from the second floor met the landing It giggled in a glass harpsichord trilling Rudy knew it was giggling at **him**, but he could make no movement from that corner

Kris opened her eyes and stared at him with distaste "Why did you come here?"

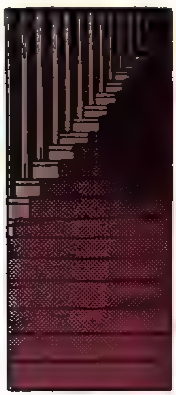
"Because we're gonna be married."

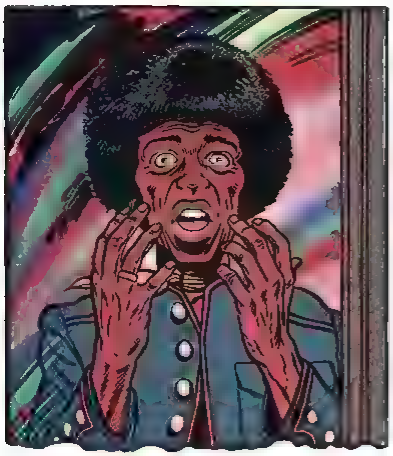
"Get out of here "

"I love you, Kris. Please "

She kicked out at him It didn't hurt, but it was meant to He backed out of the closet slowly

Jonah was down in the living room. The blond girl who had answered the door was trying to get his pants off him. He kept shaking his head no, and trying to fend her off with a weak-wristed hand. The record player under the brick-and-board bookshelves was playing Simon and Garfunkel, "The Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine "





"Melting," Jonah said gently. "Melting," and he pointed toward the big, foggy mirror over the fireplace mantel. The mirror was dim and chill. "Melting!" Jonah yelled suddenly, cover-

ing his eyes

"Oh shit!" the blond girl said, and threw him down, giving up at last She came toward Rudy

"What's wrong with him?" Rudy asked.

"He's freaking out again."

"Yeah, but what's happening to him?"

She shrugged "He sees his face melting, that's what he says."

"Is he on marijuana?"

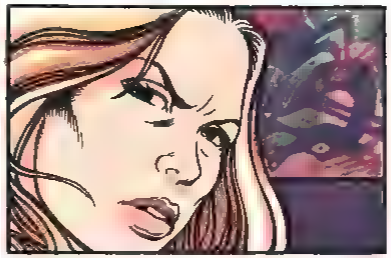
The blond girl looked at him with sudden distrust. "Mari—? Hey, who are you?"

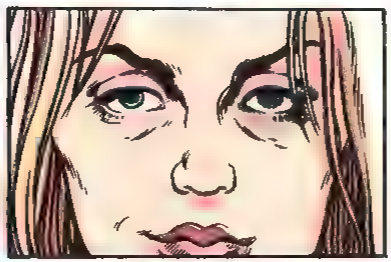
"I'm a friend of Kris's."

The blond girl assayed him for a moment more, then by the way her shoulders dropped and her posture relaxed, she accepted him.

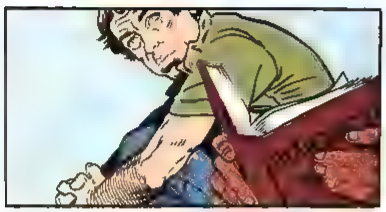
There was a Middle Earth poster on the wall behind her, with its brightness faded in a long, straight swath where the sun caught it every morning. He looked around uneasily. He didn't know what to do

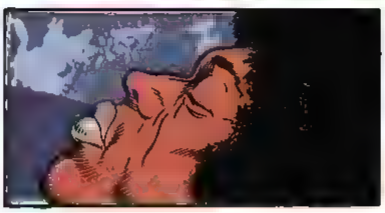
Another record dropped onto the turntable and Stevie Wonder blew hard into his harmonica and started singing, "I Was Made to Love Her." The girl walked into the dining room. Rudy joined her





"I was engaged to Kris," Rudy said, "We was going to be married when I got out of basic. But she decided to come over here with Jonah, and I didn't want to push her So I waited eight months, but I'm out of the army now." The girl didn't respond





When Rudy went back into the living room, Jonah was sitting up on the sofa, reading Hesse's Magister Ludi

"Jonah?" Rudy said Jonah looked up It took him a while to recognize Rudy

When he did, he patted the sofa beside him, and Rudy came and sat down.

"Hey, Rudy, where y'been?"

"I've been in the army "

"Wow. You out now? I mean for good?"

Rudy nodded. "Uh-huh. Medical "

"Hey, that's good."

They sat quietly for a while Jonah started to nod, and then said to himself, "You're not very tired "

Rudy said, "Jonah, hey listen, what's the story with Kris? You know, we were supposed to get married about eight months ago "

"She's around someplace," Jonah answered

Out of the kitchen, through the dining room where the blond girl lay sleeping, came the

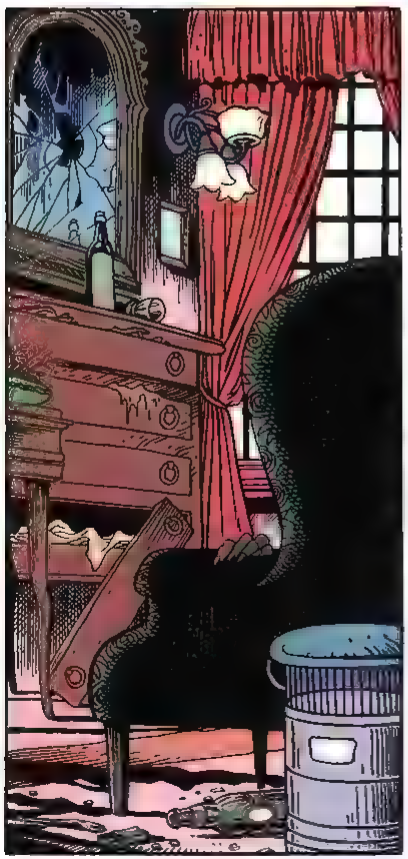
sound of something wild, tearing at meat It went on for a long time, but Rudy was looking out the front window, the big bay window. There was a man in a dark gray suit standing talking to two policemen on the sidewalk at the edge of the front walk leading up to the front door. He was pointing at the big, old house.

"Jonah, can Kris come away now?"

Jonah looked angry. "Hey, listen, man, nobody's keeping her here She's been grooving with all of us and she likes it Go ask her Christ, don't bug me!"

The two cops were walking up to the front door

Rudy got up and went to answer the



door bell

"May I help you?" Rudy asked them.

The first cop said, "Do you live here?"

"Yes," said Rudy "My name is Rudolph Boekel. May I help you?"

"We'd like to come inside and talk to you."

"Do you have a search warrant?"

"We don't want to search, we only want to talk to you Are you in the army?"

"Just discharged. I came home to see my family."

"Can we come in?"

"No, sir "

The second cop looked troubled, "Is this the place they call 'The Hill'?"

"Who?" Rudy asked, looking perplexed.

"Well, the neighbors said this was 'The Hill' and there were some pretty wild parties going on here."

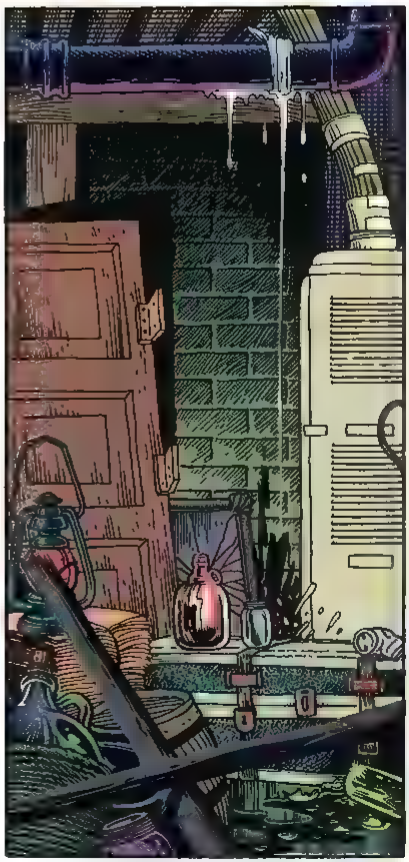
"Do you hear any partying?"

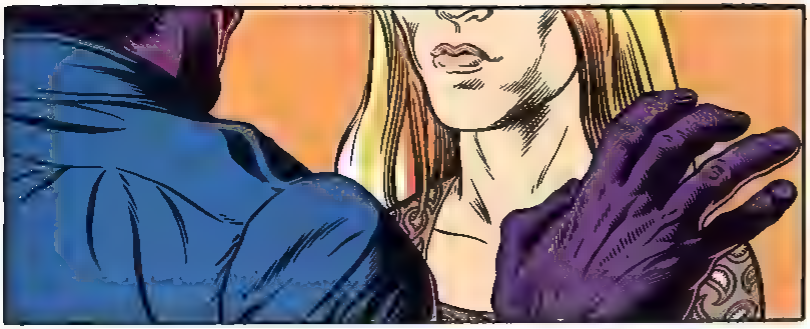
The cops looked at each other. Rudy added, "It's always very quiet here. My mother is dying of cancer of the stomach."

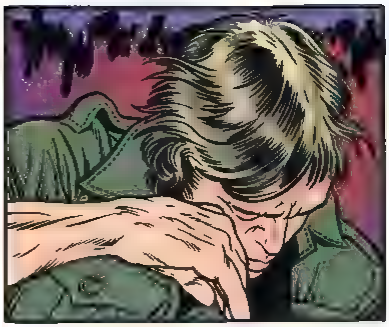
They let Rudy move in because he was able to talk to people who came to the door from the outside. Aside from Rudy, who went out to get food, and the weekly trips to the unemployment line, no one left The Hill. It was usually very quiet.

Except sometimes there was a sound of growling in the back hall leading up to what had been a maid's room, and the splashing from the basement, the sound of wet things on bricks

It was a self-contained little universe, bordered on the north by acid and mescaline, on the south by pot and peyote, on the east by speed and redballs, and on the west by downers and amphetamines. There were eleven people living in The Hill. Eleven, and Rudy.





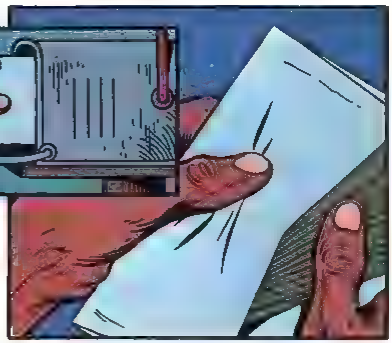


He walked through the halls and sometimes found Kris, who would not talk to him, save once, when she asked him if he'd ever been heavy behind **anything** except love. He didn't know what to answer her, so he only said "Please," and she called him a square and walked off toward the stairway leading to the dormered attic.

Rudy had heard squeaking from the attic. It had sounded to him like the shrieking of mice being torn to pieces There were cats in the house.

He did not know why he was there, except that he didn't understand why **she** wanted to stay. His head always buzzed and he sometimes felt that if he just said the right thing, the right way, Kris would come away with him He began to dislike the light. It hurt his eyes.

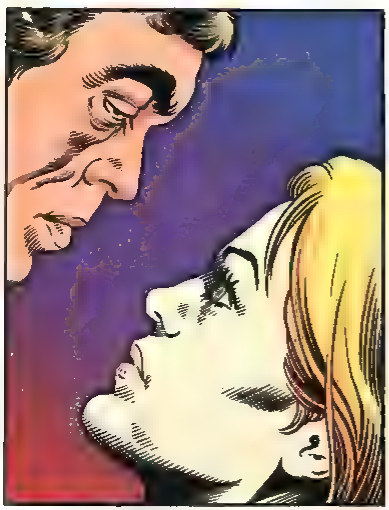
No one talked to anyone else very much. There was always a struggle to keep high, to keep the **group high** as elevated as possible

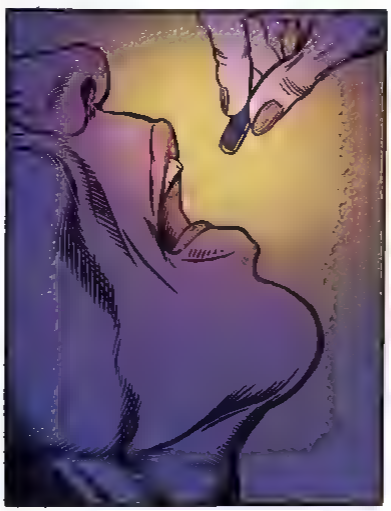


Rudy became their one link with the outside. He had written to someone—his parents, a friend, a bank, someone—and now there was money coming in. Not much, but enough to keep the food stocked, and the rent paid. But he insisted Kris be nice to him.

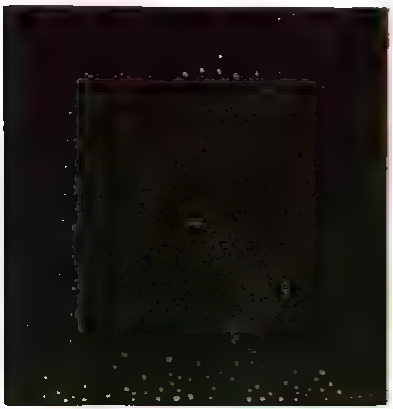
They all made her be nice to him, and she slept with him in the little room on the second floor where Rudy had put his newspapers and his duffel bag. He lay there most of the day, when he was not out on errands for The Hill, and he read the smaller items about train wrecks and molestations in the suburbs. And Kris came to him and they made love of a sort

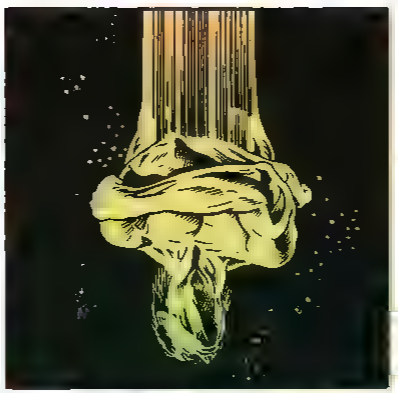
One night she convinced him he should "make it, heavy behind acid,"and he swallowed fifteen hundred mikes cut with Methedrine, in two big gel caps.



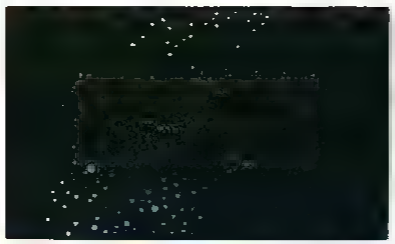


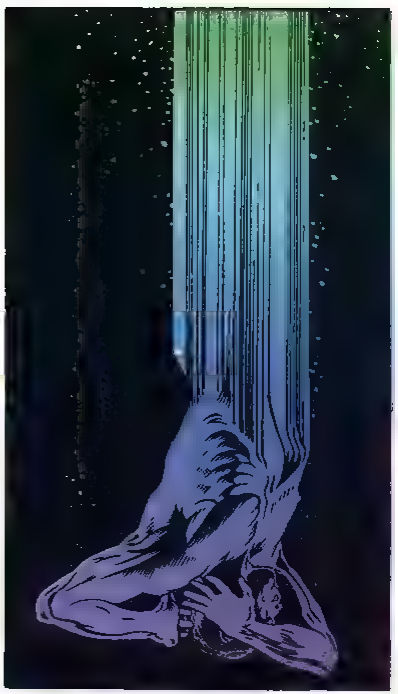
There was an insistent pulsing, growing somewhere below him, and he was afraid of it as he descended, the high-pitched whining of something threatening to shatter. He felt pan-



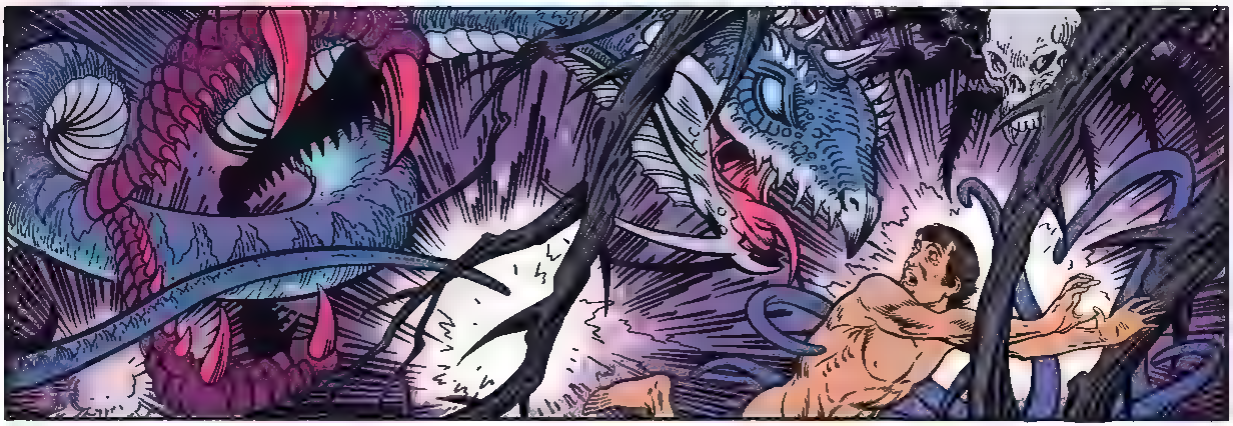


ic. Panic gripped him, flailed at him; his throat constricted, he tried to grasp the veil and it tore away in his hands; then he was falling, faster

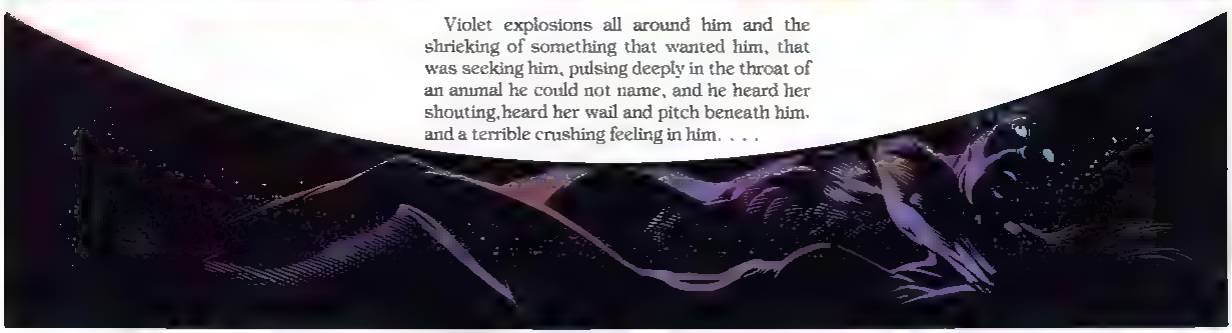


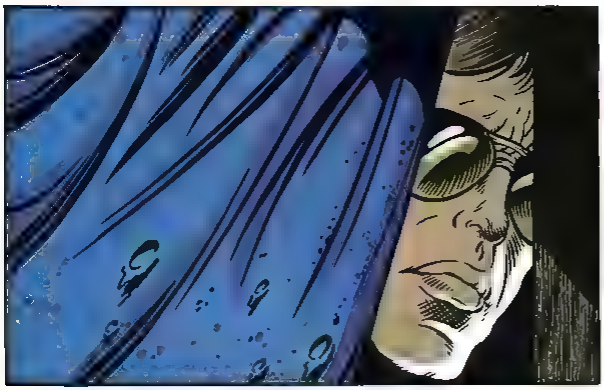


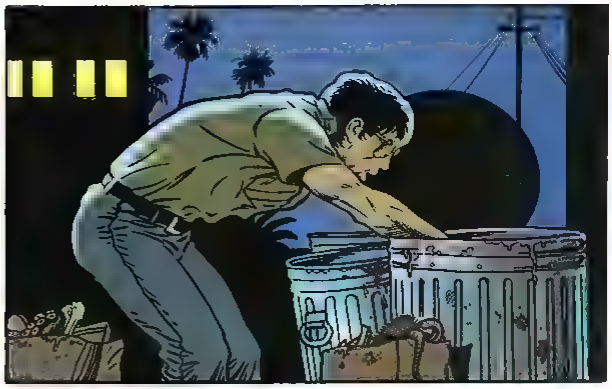
now, much faster, and afraid!



Violet explosions all around him and the shrieking of something that wanted him, that was seeking him, pulsing deeply in the throat of an animal he could not name, and he heard her shouting, heard her wail and pitch beneath him, and a terrible crushing feeling in him. . . .







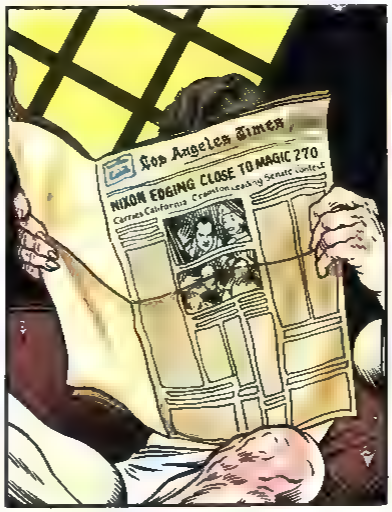
After that, Rudy seldom went out into the light. He did the shopping at night, wearing shades. He emptied the garbage at night, and he swept down the front walk, and did the front lawn with scissors because the lawnmower would have annoyed the residents of the lanai apartments (who no longer complained, because there was seldom a sound from The Hill).

He began to realize he had not seen some of the eleven young people who lived in The Hill for a long time. But the sounds from above and below and around him in the house grew more frequent.

Rudy's clothes were too large for him now. He wore only underpants. His hands and feet hurt. The knuckles of his fingers were larger, from cracking them, and they were always an angry crimson.

His head always buzzed. The thin, perpetual odor of pot had saturated into the wood walls

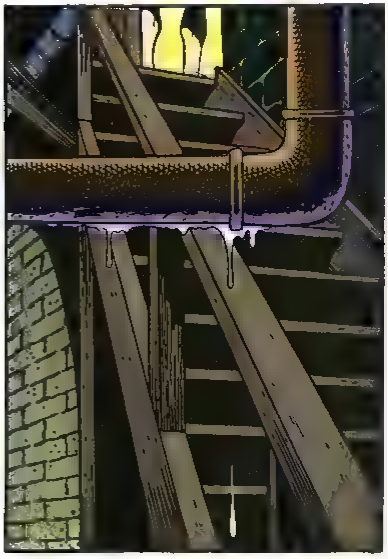
and the rafters. He had an itch on the outside of his ears he could not quell. He read newspapers all the time, old newspapers whose items were imbedded in his memory. He remembered a job he had once held as a garage mechanic, but that seemed a very long time ago. When they cut off the electricity in The Hill, it didn't bother Rudy, because he preferred the dark.



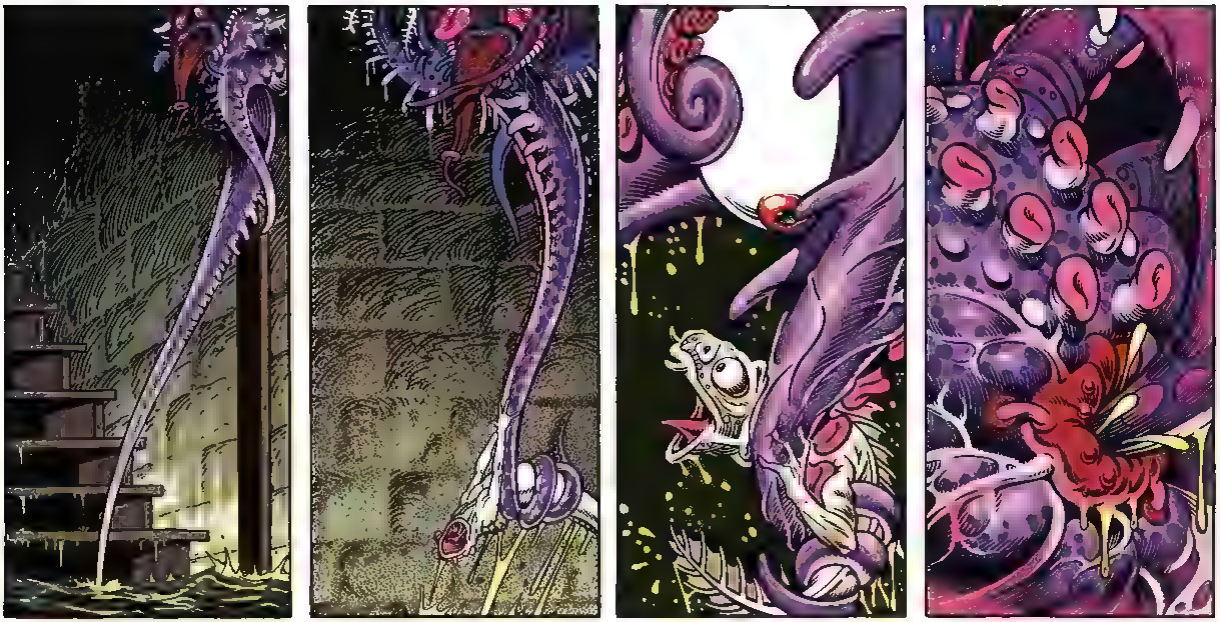
But he went to tell the eleven.

He could not find them.

They were all gone. Even Kris, who should have been there somewhere.

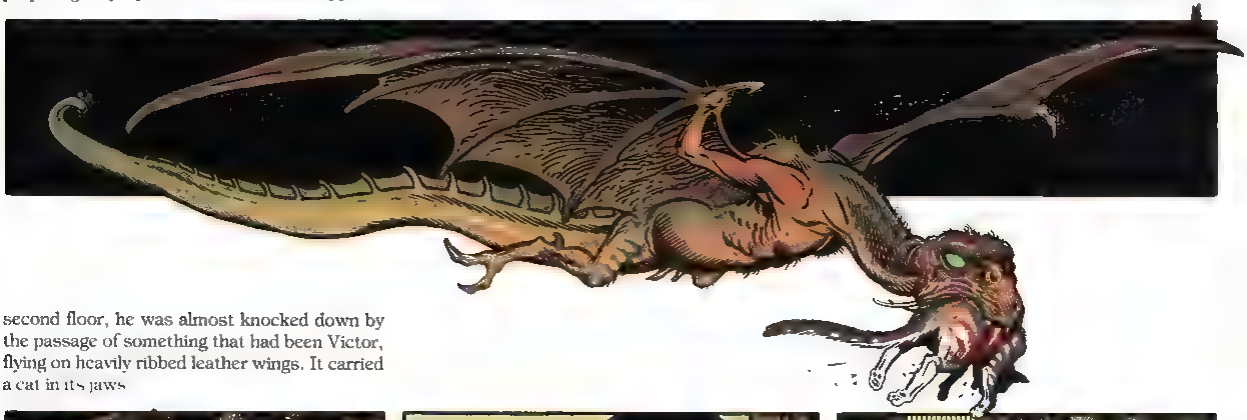


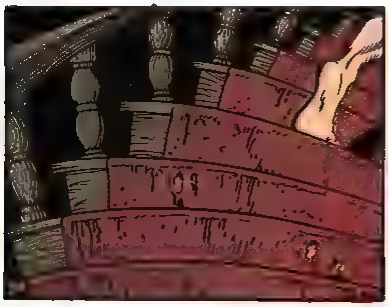
He heard the moist sounds from the basement and went down with fur and silence into

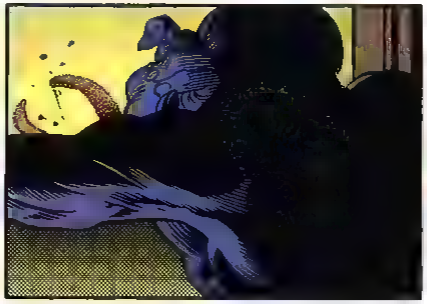


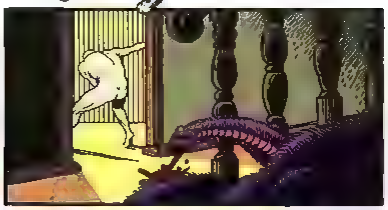
the darkness. The basement had been flooded. One of the eleven was there. His name was Teddy. He was attached to the slime-coated upper wall of the basement, hanging close to the stone, pulsing softly and giving off a thin purple light, purple as a bruise. He dropped a rubbery arm into the water, and let it hang there, moving idly with the tideless tide. Then something came near it, and he made a sharp movement, and brought the thing up still writhing in his rubbery grip, and inched it along the wall to a dark, moist spot on his upper surface, near the veins that covered its length, and pushed the thing at the dark-blood spot, where it shrieked with a terrible sound, and went in and there was a sucking noise, then a swallowing sound.

Rudy went back upstairs. Climbing to the second floor, he was almost knocked down by the passage of something that had been Victor, flying on heavily ribbed leather wings. It carried a cat in its jaws.

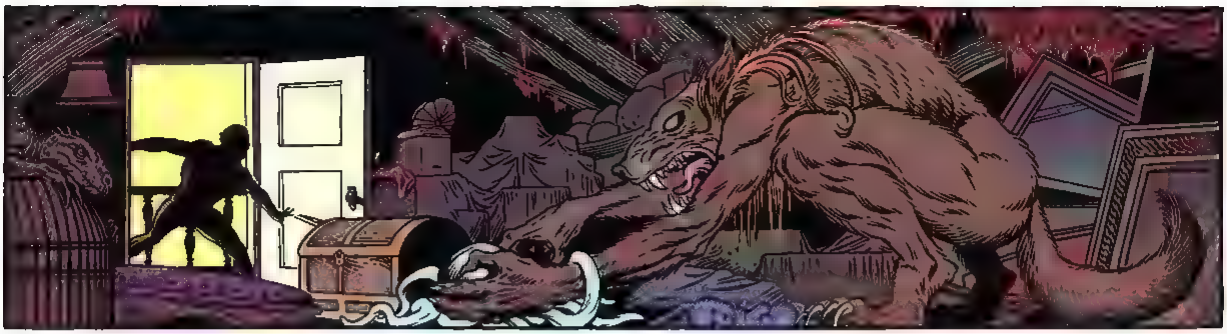








He saw the thing on the stairs that sounded as though it was counting heavy gold pieces. It was not counting heavy gold pieces. Rudy could not look at it; it made him feel sick.



He found Kris in the attic, in a corner breaking the skull and sucking out the moist brains of a thing that giggled like a harpsichord.

"Kris, we have to go away," he told her. She reached out and touched him, snapping her long, pointed, dirty fingernails against him. He rang like crystal.

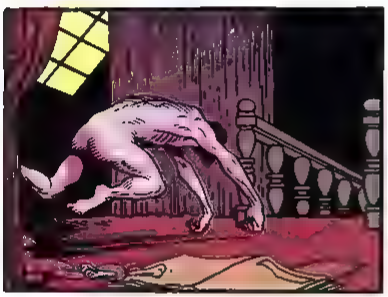
In the rafters of the attic, Jonah crouched, gargoyled and sleeping. There was a green stain on his jaws, and something stringy in his claws.

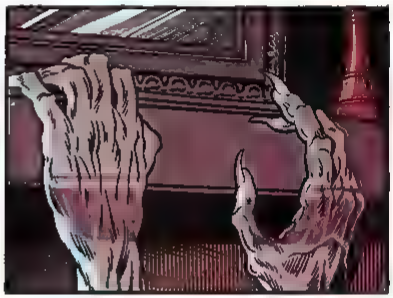
"Kris, please," he said urgently.

His head buzzed

His ears itched.

Kris sucked out the last of the mellow good things in the skull of the silent little creature, and scraped idly at the flaccid body with hairy hands She settled back on her haunches, and her long, hairy muzzle came up.





Rudy scuttled away.

He ran loping, his knuckles brushing the attic floor as he scampered for safety. Behind him, Kris was growling. He got down to the second floor and then to the first, and tried to climb up on the Morris chair to the mantel, so he could see himself in the mirror, by the light of the moon, through the fly-blown window. But Naomi was on the window, lapping up the flies with her tongue.

He climbed with desperation, wanting to see himself. And when he stood before the mirror, he saw that he was transparent, that there was nothing inside him, that his ears had grown pointed and had hair on their tips; his eyes

were as huge as a tarsier's, and the reflected light hurt him.

Then he heard the growling behind and below him

The little glass goblin turned, and the werewolf rose up on its hind legs and touched him

till he rang like fine crystal

And the werewolf said with very little concern, "Have you ever grooved heavy behind

anything except love?"

"Please!" the little glass goblin begged, just as the great hairy paw slapped him into a

million coruscating rainbow fragments, all expanding consciously into the tight little enclosed universe that was The Hill, all buzzing highly contacted and tingling off into a darkness that began to seep out through the silent wooden walls. . . .

HEILMAN

SEIZED AGAIN AS HE WAS BY THE SHADES OF DEATH, HEILMAN OPENS HIS EYES ONCE MORE UPON AN UNKNOWN WORLD...

OH! LOOK!

LOOK! OUR PRINCE CHARMING IS WAKING! NOW I CAN COVER HIM WITH KISSES!

SHUSSH! LET ME HEAR HIS FIRST WORDS!

MMM..WHERE AM I?

YOUR HIGHNESS...

SOLDIER! HOW DARE YOU DISTURB OUR LORD'S AWAKENING?

COME BACK LATER, YOU PEASANT!

AHHH! ALL THESE LIVES... AND DEATHS! I'LL END UP NOT KNOWING WHO I AM!

THIS CAN'T BE JUST A NIGHTMARE...ANYWAY, IF IT'S NOT A DREAM THIS TIME, HERE I AM PLAYING THE PART OF A PRINCE...

...COULD THIS BE MY REAL IDENTITY? I'M TOTALLY CONFUSED.

THIS ISN'T UNPLEASANT, BUT AS USUAL, IT CAN'T LAST!

TRY TO ACT NATURAL - THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO!

NOW, NOW, MY BEAUTIES, CALM DOWN! WHAT DID THE SOLDIER WANT?

!!

HEY! YOU! COME HERE!

YOUR HIGHNESS, THERE IS A WOUNDED WARRIOR WHO WANTS TO SEE YOU. I FEAR HE WON'T LIVE MUCH LONGER

LET'S GO TO HIM! I'LL FOLLOW!

42

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE INFIRMARY, A MAN, OBVIOUSLY AT DEATH'S DOOR, SIGNALS TO HEILMAN TO APPROACH.

...CLOSER... MY LORD... WHAT I HAVE TO SAY... IS SECRET...

ALL THIS IS VERY DISTURBING!

DIAMOND... BLACK... ETERNITY... ATTACK... DEMONS AND SORCERERS... DEATH...

AS THE UNFORTUNATE MAN BREATHES HIS LAST, HEILMAN RETURNS TO HIS TENT, WHERE HIS EXCITED HAREM AWAITS HIM.

EEEE! OUR PRINCE IS BACK!

AFTER A NIGHT OF LOVE AND EROTIC EXTRAVAGANCE...

YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR PERSONAL GUARD IS READY FOR THE MORNING REVIEW!

I AM RESPECTED BY THIS MAN, LOVED BY THOSE WOMEN...

I LIKE THIS POWER... MY DECISION IS MADE!

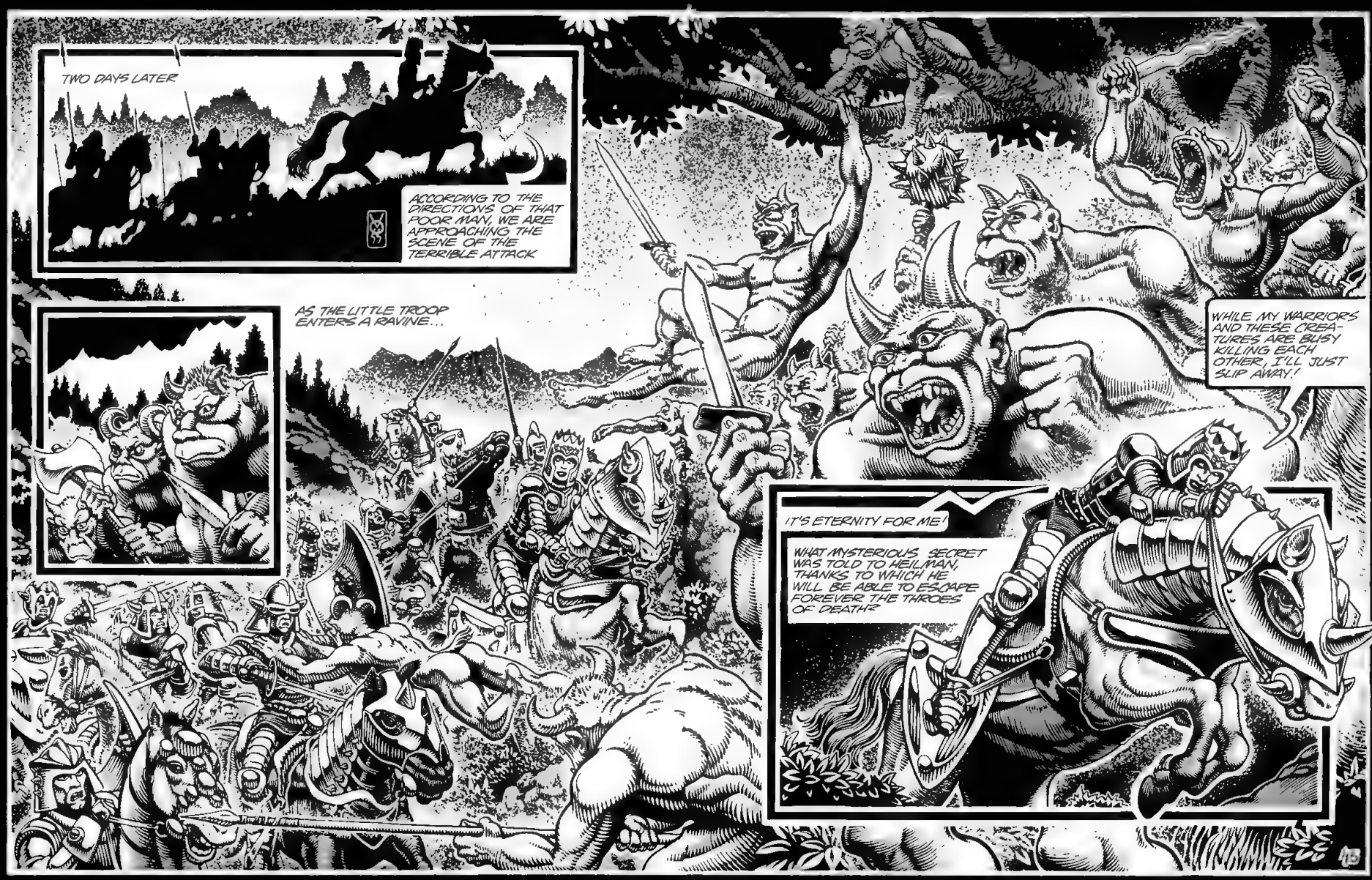
I DON'T INTEND TO GIVE UP THIS PRINCELY LIFE!

THANKS TO THE REVELATIONS OF THE WOUNDED MAN, THE BLACK SHADOW OF...

...DEATH WILL NEVER HANG OVER ME AGAIN!

GATHER TOGETHER FIFTEEN OF OUR BEST WARRIORS! WE'RE LEAVING IMMEDIATELY!

WHA... YES... YOUR HIGHNESS!


TWO DAYS LATER
ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIONS OF THAT POOR MAN, WE ARE APPROACHING THE SCENE OF THE TERRIBLE ATTACK
AS THE LITTLE TROOP ENTERS A RAVINE...
WHILE MY WARRIORS AND THESE CREATURES ARE BUSY KILLING EACH OTHER, I'LL JUST SLIP AWAY!
IT'S ETERNITY FOR ME!
WHAT MYSTERIOUS SECRET WAS TOLD TO HEILMAN, THANKS TO WHICH HE WILL BE ABLE TO ESCAPE FOREVER THE THROES OF DEATH?
45

A SHORT GALLOP AWAY FROM THE BATTLE, WHICH HE HAS PROVOKED...

THERE'S THE GROTTO, JUST AS THE KNIGHT DESCRIBED IT!

HEY! HO!

NO USE HIDING YOURSELF, DRUID, SORCERER, OR DEMON!

I SHALL MOST ASSUREDLY FERRET YOU OUT IN THE END, IN SPITE OF THE DARKNESS!

WHAT DO YOU WANT, HEILMAN?

YOU KNOW MY REAL IDENTITY?

I KNOW AS WELL THAT YOU ARE HERE TO PROLONG THE EXISTENCE OF THIS BODY YOU HAVE INVADED, DOWN TO THE LAST CELL OF ITS MEMORY!

EXACTLY! THE MAGIC POWER OF THE BLACK DIAMOND, KNOWN AS THE **HEART OF HANRAHAN**, WILL MAKE ME AN IMMORTAL, AN ETERNAL BEING!

MAD! YOU ARE MAD, YOUR EGOTISM AND YOUR THIRST FOR POWER...

...WILL BE YOUR RUIN!

CAN YOU PIT YOURSELF AGAINST MY SWORD, YOU WHO BURY YOURSELF IN THE SHADOWS?

NONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF...

SUDDENLY, IN THE TOMBLIKE DARKNESS OF THE CAVE, AN ECTOPLASMIC BEING MATERIALIZES...

THE NEGATIVE REPLICA OF HEILMAN, HIS ANTI-MATTER DOUBLE.

ACCORDING TO THE LAST WORDS OF A DYING MAN, THE HEART OF HANRAHAN IS IN YOUR POSSESSION, AND IF YOU ARE COUNTING ON THIS ILLUSION TO PROTECT YOU, HERE IS MY RESPONSE!

AT THE PRECISE MOMENT THAT THE SWORD PLUNGES TO ITS HILT INTO THE HEART OF THE INCUBUS CONJURED UP BY THE SORCERER, A RAGING PAIN OVERWHELMS HEILMAN...

A HOLE OPENS IN HIS ARMOR AND HIS LIFE FLOWS OUT FROM A WOUND IN HIS CHEST.

YOUR IGNORANCE OF THE OCCULT LAWS OF THE COSMOS HAS CONDEMNED YOU! THE LIFE OF YOUR ANTI-MATTER DOUBLE WAS BOUND TO YOURS, AND ITS DESTRUCTION...

...LEADS INEVITABLY TO YOUR OWN!

A SAD END FOR ONE SEARCHING FOR IMMORTALITY!

THE DIAMOND... THE... HEART... OF..HAN... RA...HAN...

WHEN THE LIFE OF THE BODY OCCUPIED BY HEILMAN IS EXTINGUISHED, THE HOOKED FINGERS OF THE MASTER OF THE SHADOWS ROOT OUT FROM THE GAPING WOUND IN HIS CHEST, A STONE...

BY SOME STRANGE IRONY, WHAT YOU SOUGHT WAS WITHIN YOU!

THE HEART OF HANRAHAN!

LYING CLOSE TO YOUR HEART, IT WOULD HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO LIVE INDEFINITELY, IF YOUR AMBITION HAD NOT BLINDED THIS BODY'S MIND...

NOW, THANKS TO MY DIAMOND, YOU ARE AT MY MERCY!

BUT I HAVE DECIDED THAT YOU SHALL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE: YOU WILL RETURN FROM WHENCE YOU CAME, INTO THE DIMENSION WHERE WE ONCE MET FACE TO FACE...

...WHERE YOU SHALL BE MY SERVANT, MY CONNECTION TO TERRESTRIAL LIFE...

AND YOU SHALL BE ETERNAL AT LAST!

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY...

AT THE TOMB OF THE TERRESTRIAL HEILMAN...

TO BE CONTINUED...

"HELL IS OTHER ALIENS"... THE FIRST EXISTENTIAL SCIENCE-FICTION COMIC STORY

PROLOGUE

DEDICATED TO THE HUMAN RACE, TO WHICH MOST OF MY READERS BELONG
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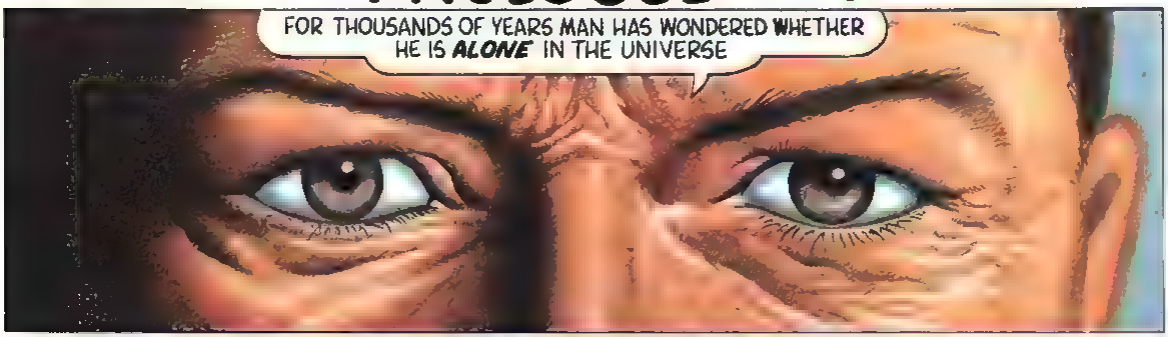
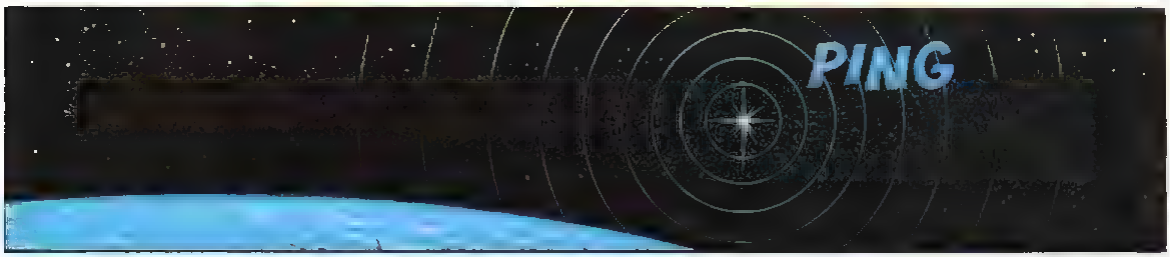
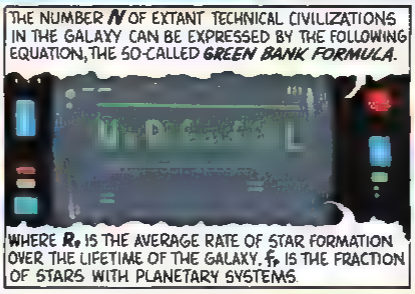
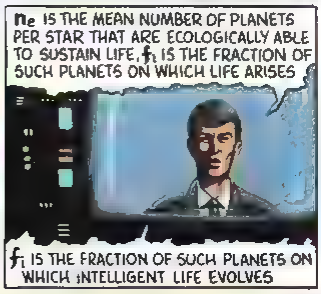
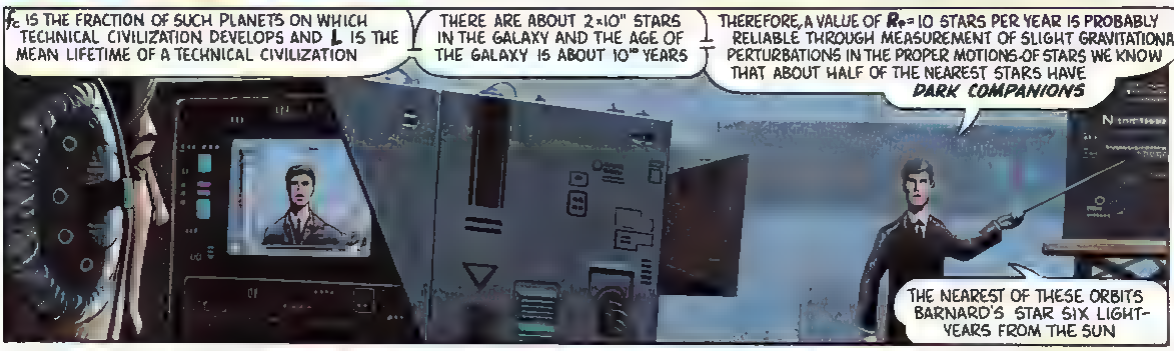


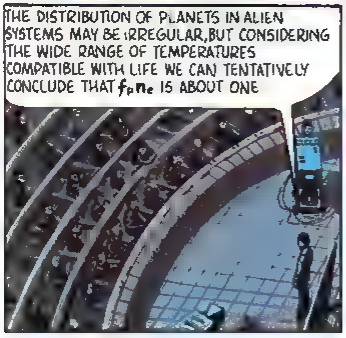


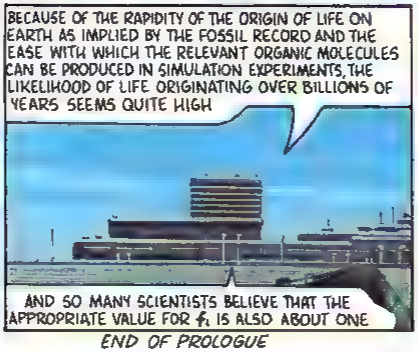
THE PARAMETERS AND UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED IN CALCULATING THE PROBABILITY OF ADVANCED TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS ARE DEMONSTRATED IN A SIMPLE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM DEVISED BY U.S. ASTRO-PHYSICIST F.D. DRAKE

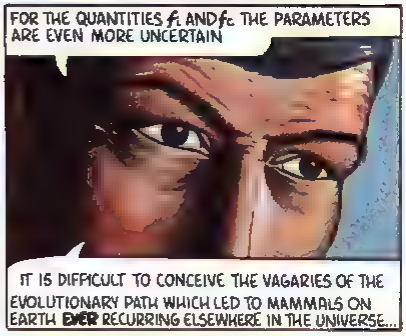

THE NUMBER N OF EXTANT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY CAN BE EXPRESSED BY THE FOLLOWING EQUATION, THE SO-CALLED GREEN BANK FORMULA.
WHERE R_* IS THE AVERAGE RATE OF STAR FORMATION OVER THE LIFETIME OF THE GALAXY, f_p IS THE FRACTION OF STARS WITH PLANETARY SYSTEMS


n_e IS THE MEAN NUMBER OF PLANETS PER STAR THAT ARE ECOLOGICALLY ABLE TO SUSTAIN LIFE, f_l IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH LIFE ARISES
f_i IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH INTELLIGENT LIFE EVOLVES


f_c IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION DEVELOPS AND L IS THE MEAN LIFETIME OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION
THERE ARE ABOUT 2×10¹¹ STARS IN THE GALAXY AND THE AGE OF THE GALAXY IS ABOUT 10¹⁰ YEARS
THEREFORE, A VALUE OF R_*=10 STARS PER YEAR IS PROBABLY RELIABLE THROUGH MEASUREMENT OF SLIGHT GRAVITATIONAL PERTURBATIONS IN THE PROPER MOTIONS OF STARS WE KNOW THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE NEAREST STARS HAVE DARK COMPANIONS
THE NEAREST OF THESE ORBITS BARNARD'S STAR SIX LIGHT-YEARS FROM THE SUN

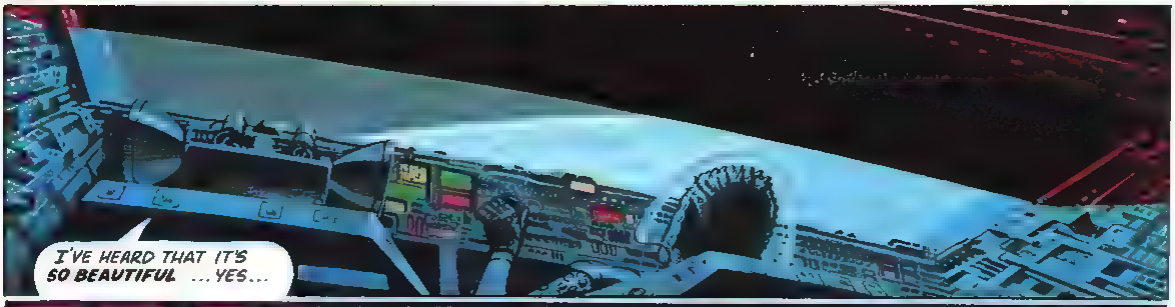

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PLANETS IN ALIEN SYSTEMS MAY BE IRREGULAR, BUT CONSIDERING THE WIDE RANGE OF TEMPERATURES COMPATIBLE WITH LIFE WE CAN TENTATIVELY CONCLUDE THAT $f_p n_e$ IS ABOUT ONE


BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDITY OF THE ORIGIN OF LIFE ON EARTH AS IMPLIED BY THE FOSSIL RECORD AND THE EASE WITH WHICH THE RELEVANT ORGANIC MOLECULES CAN BE PRODUCED IN SIMULATION EXPERIMENTS, THE LIKELIHOOD OF LIFE ORIGINATING OVER BILLIONS OF YEARS SEEMS QUITE HIGH
AND SO MANY SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT THE APPROPRIATE VALUE FOR f_l IS ALSO ABOUT ONE


FOR THE QUANTITIES f_i AND f_c THE PARAMETERS ARE EVEN MORE UNCERTAIN
IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON EARTH EVER RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE...

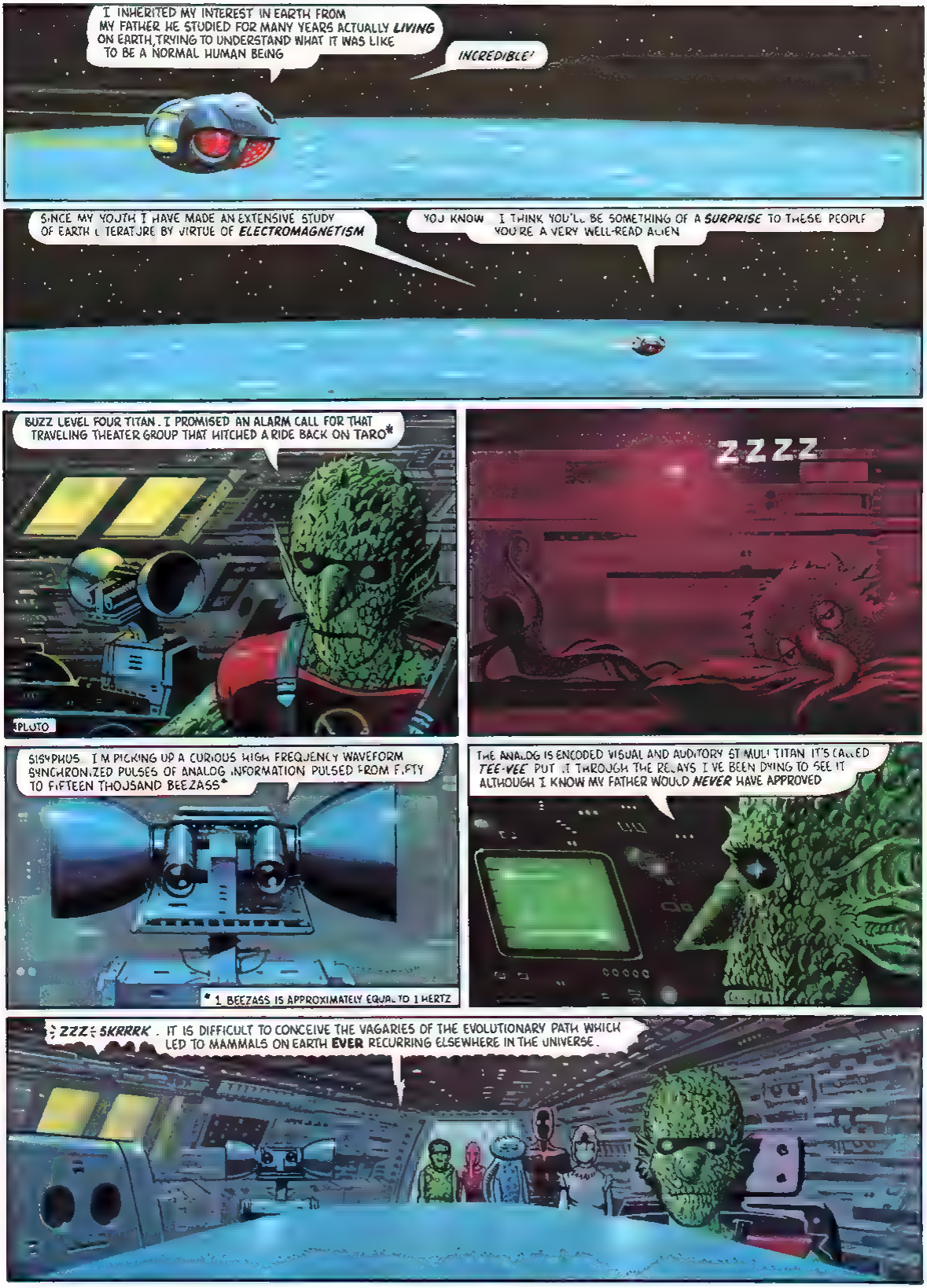
END OF PROLOGUE

OKAY, TITAN. WE'RE IN ORBIT. SET THE INERTIAL GUIDANCE AND WITHDRAW THE SHIELDS
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THIS LEGENDARY PLANET EARTH

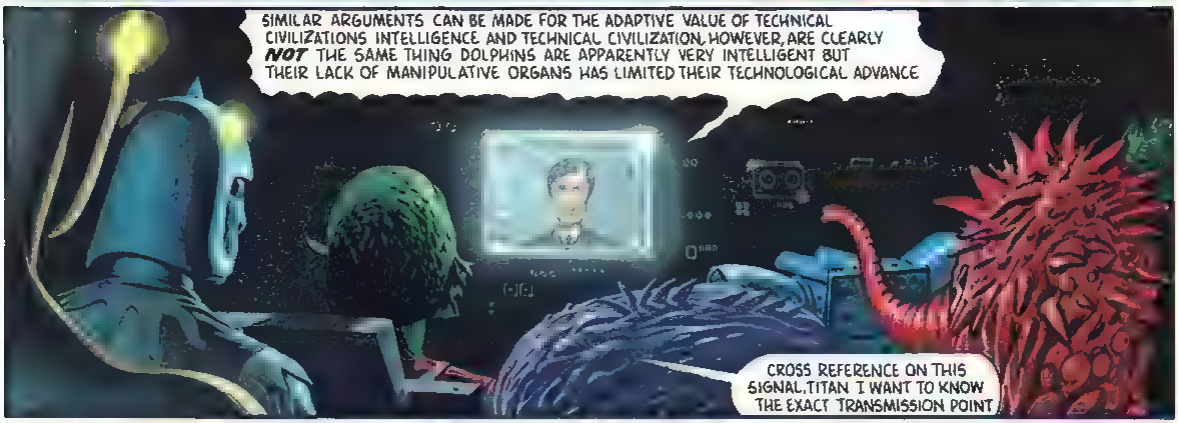


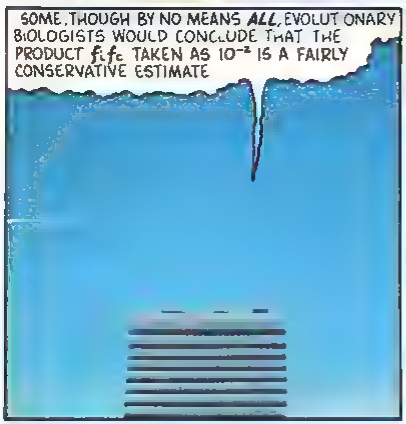
SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO DANGEROUS

NO WONDER THESE HUMANS PERSONALIZE THEIR PLANET WITH THE PRONOUN OF THE FEMALE GENDER.
THEY SAY THAT THERE IS GREEN GRASS ON EARTH, SISYPHUS!
TITAN... I'D BELIEVE ANYTHING IN THIS PART OF THE GALAXY. THERE MUST BE A LOT OF STRANGE THINGS DOWN THERE BUT I HAVEN'T COME HALFWAY ACROSS THE ENTIRE GALAXY JUST TO SIGHTSEE!
I WOULD HAVE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO YOU LONG AGO BUT FOR THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A ROBOT AND IT WOULD ALL ULTIMATELY BE MEANINGLESS TO YOU
HOWEVER, BELIEVE ME THERE IS A VERY SERIOUS PURPOSE BEHIND ALL THIS


I INHERITED MY INTEREST IN EARTH FROM MY FATHER HE STUDIED FOR MANY YEARS ACTUALLY LIVING ON EARTH, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING
INCREDIBLE!
SINCE MY YOUTH I HAVE MADE AN EXTENSIVE STUDY OF EARTH LITERATURE BY VIRTUE OF ELECTROMAGNETISM
YOU KNOW I THINK YOU'LL BE SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE TO THESE PEOPLE YOU'RE A VERY WELL-READ ALIEN
BUZZ LEVEL FOUR TITAN. I PROMISED AN ALARM CALL FOR THAT TRAVELING THEATER GROUP THAT HITCHED A RIDE BACK ON TARO*
PLUTO
ZZZZ
SISYPHUS I'M PICKING UP A CURIOUS HIGH FREQUENCY WAVEFORM SYNCHRONIZED PULSES OF ANALOG INFORMATION PULSED FROM FIFTY TO FIFTEEN THOUSAND BEEZASS*
* 1 BEEZASS IS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO 1 HERTZ
THE ANALOG IS ENCODED VISUAL AND AUDITORY STIMULI TITAN. IT'S CALLED TEE-VEE PUT IT THROUGH THE RELAYS I'VE BEEN DYING TO SEE IT ALTHOUGH I KNOW MY FATHER WOULD NEVER HAVE APPROVED
ZZZ SKRRRK. IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON EARTH EVER RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE.

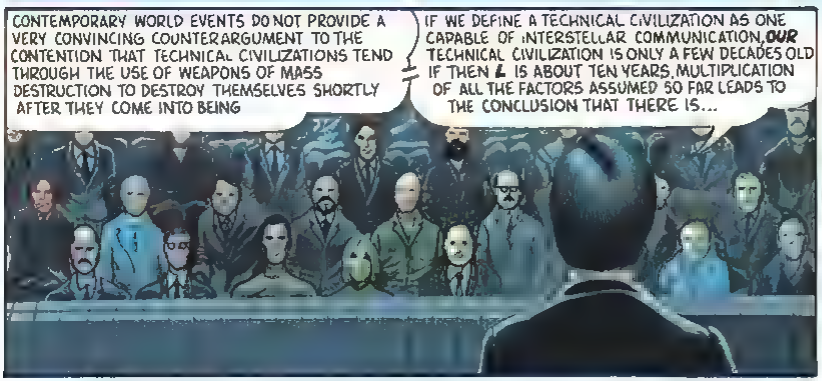
ON THE OTHER HAND, INTELLIGENCE NEED NOT BE RESTRICTED TO ONLY THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH OCCURRED ON EARTH AND CLEARLY HAS GREAT SELECTIVE ADVANTAGES TO BOTH PREDATOR AND PREY


SIMILAR ARGUMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR THE ADAPTIVE VALUE OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION, HOWEVER, ARE CLEARLY NOT THE SAME THING DOLPHINS ARE APPARENTLY VERY INTELLIGENT BUT THEIR LACK OF MANIPULATIVE ORGANS HAS LIMITED THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE
CROSS REFERENCE ON THIS SIGNAL, TITAN I WANT TO KNOW THE EXACT TRANSMISSION POINT


SOME, THOUGH BY NO MEANS ALL, EVOLUTONARY BIOLOGISTS WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE PRODUCT $f_i f_c$ TAKEN AS 10^{-2} IS A FAIRLY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE

STILL MORE UNCERTAIN IS THE FINAL PARAMETER L THE LIFETIME OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION.

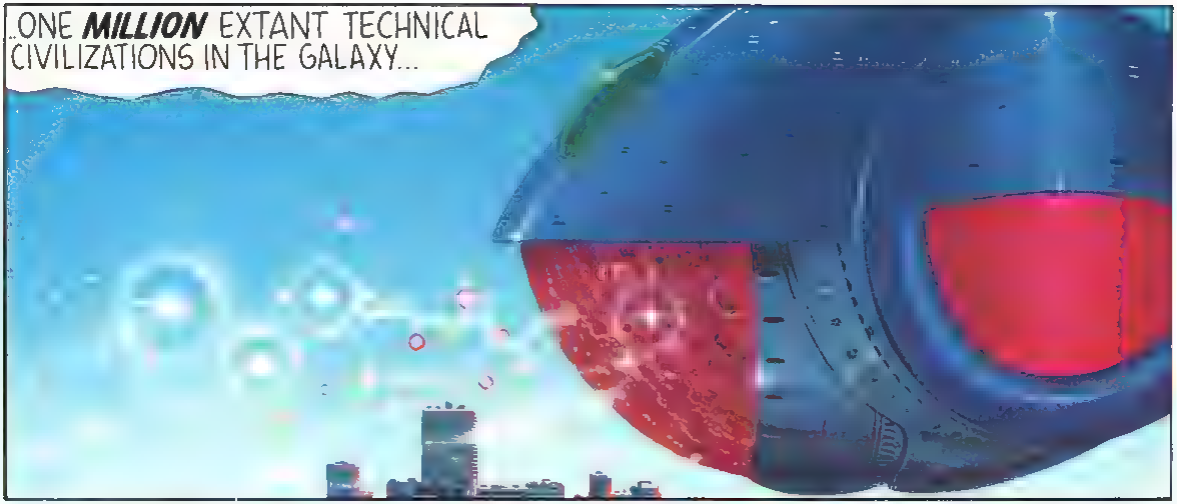
HERE THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE EXAMPLE

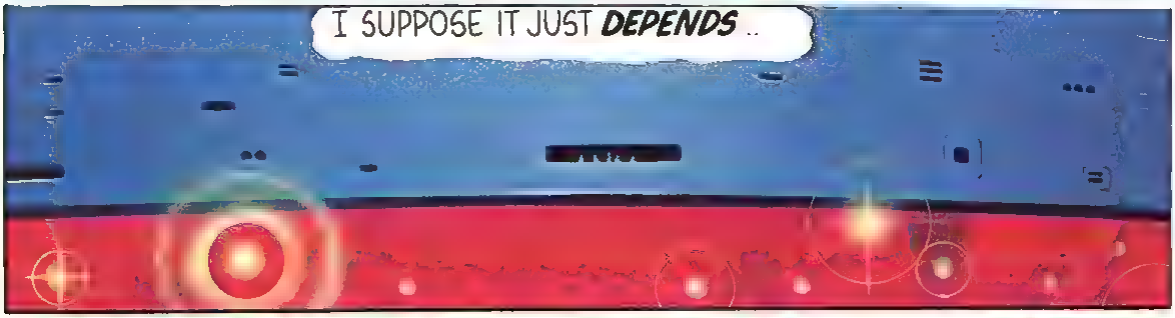

CONTEMPORARY WORLD EVENTS DO NOT PROVIDE A VERY CONVINCING COUNTERARGUMENT TO THE CONTENTION THAT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS TEND THROUGH THE USE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION TO DESTROY THEMSELVES SHORTLY AFTER THEY COME INTO BEING
IF WE DEFINE A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION AS ONE CAPABLE OF INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATION, OUR TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IS ONLY A FEW DECADES OLD IF THEN L IS ABOUT TEN YEARS, MULTIPLICATION OF ALL THE FACTORS ASSUMED SO FAR LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS...

..IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ONLY ONE TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IN THE GALAXY . AND THAT IS

OUR
OWN

AH!..BUT IF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS AVOID SELF-ANNIHILATION, THEN... THEIR LIFETIMES MAY BE VERY LONG IN THE GEOLOGICAL OR STELLAR EVOLUTIONARY TIME SCALE...
AND THEN, ACCORDING TO YOUR FORMULA, THE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY WOULD BE IMMENSE!
NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE ..IT'S NOT REAL!! Y YOU'RE DEFYING THE GREENBANK FORMULA!
I KNEW THERE WAS A GOD!
C'EST BELLE
GET UP ON THE ROOF WITH THAT CAMERA!
NOT AT ALL..NOT AT ALL... IF EVEN ONE PERCENT OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS MAKE PEACE WITH THEMSELVES, THAT WOULD GIVE A FIGURE OF LET ME SEE...YES





TO BE CONTINUED...

CURIOUS
THING
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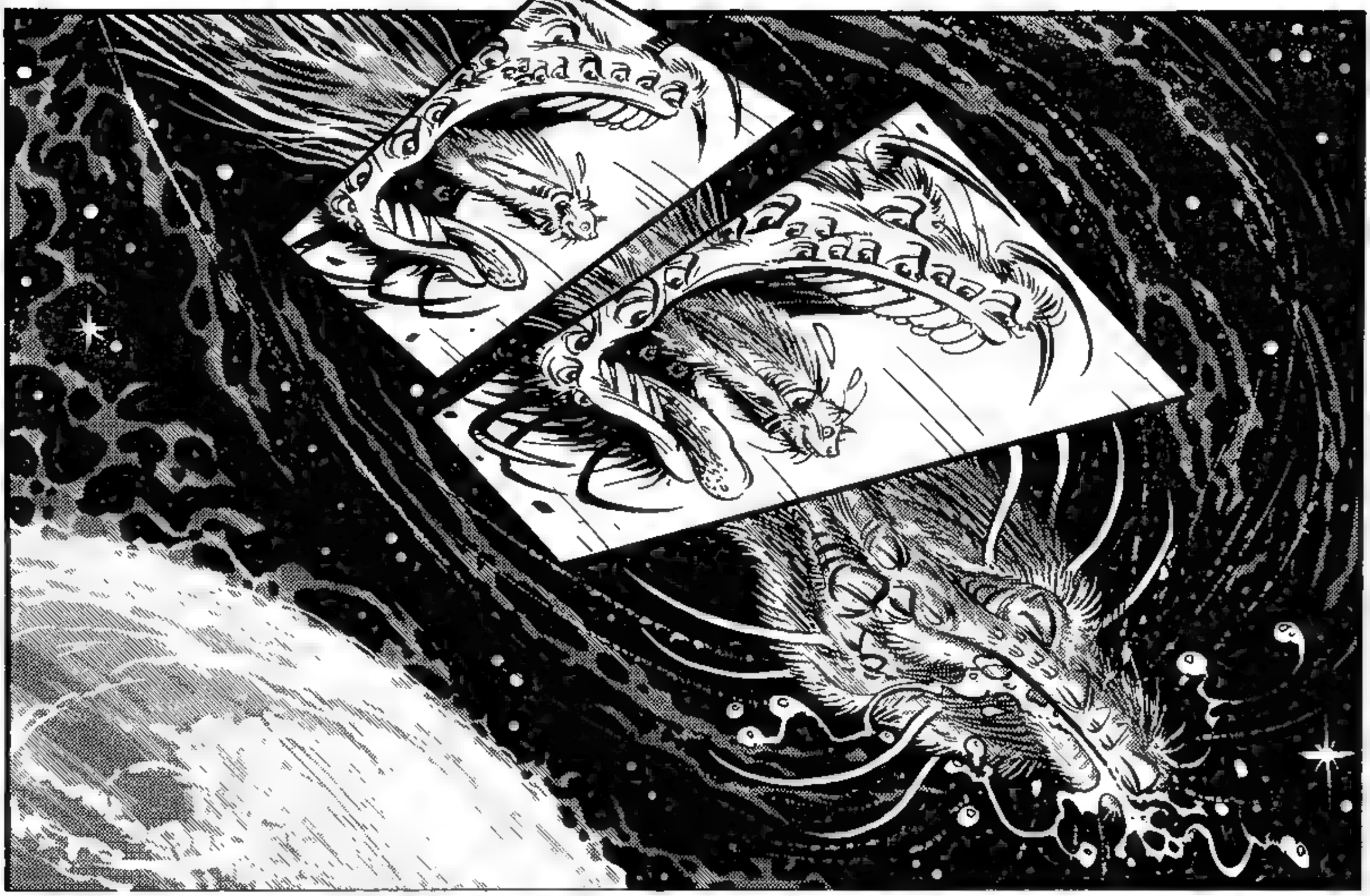

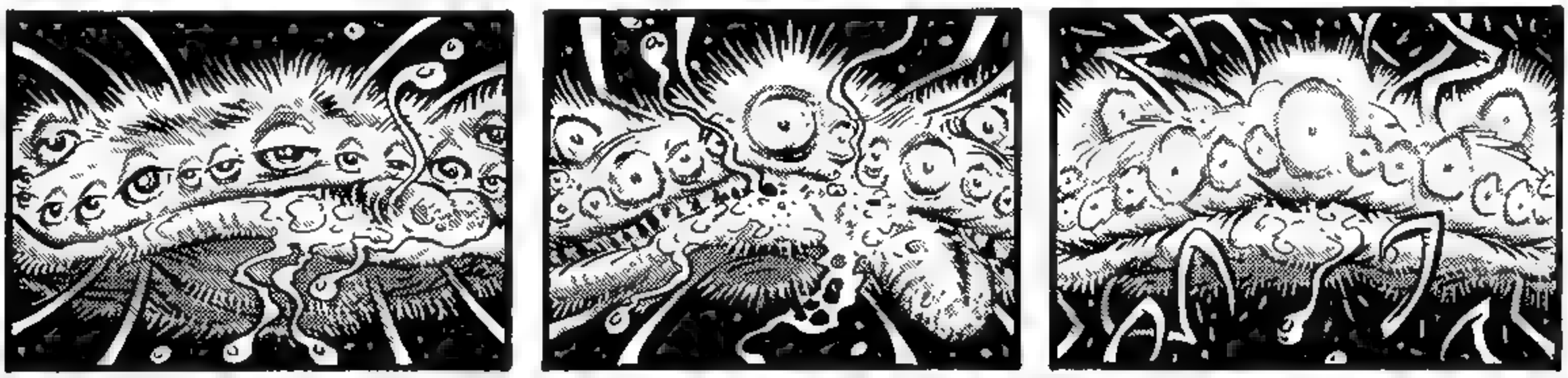

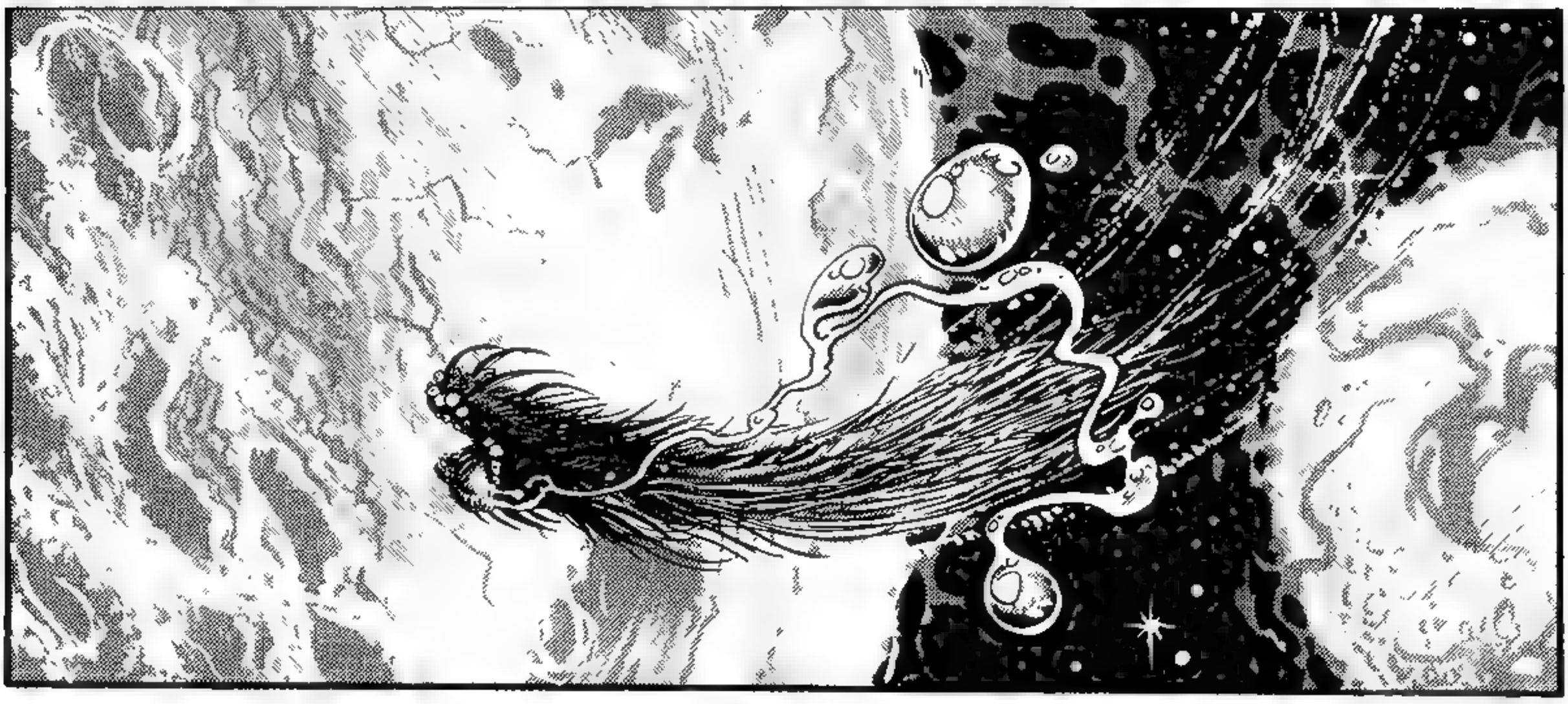

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